

TODAY

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TODAY

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ABOUT-FACE



Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., speaks during a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington. Republican opposition to Rice's possible nomination to be secretary of state began to crack Sunday, Nov. 25, 2012, as Sen. John McCain said she was "not the problem" in the White House's explanation about the Sept. 11 attack in Libya and he could be persuaded to swing behind her potential promotion.

(AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

ANNE FLAHERTY

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican opposition to U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice as

the next secretary of state began to crack Sunday as Sen. John McCain said she was "not the problem" in the White House's han-

dling of the Sept. 11 attack in Libya and suggested he could be persuaded to swing behind her possible nomination. McCain's com-

ments provide an opening for the Obama administration, which struggled in the weeks leading up to the Nov. 6 election to tamp

down speculation of a cover-up involving the attack against the U.S. diplomatic post in Benghazi.

Continued on Page 6



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Israel successfully tests "David's Sling"

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel successfully tested its newest missile defense system Sunday, the military said, a step toward making the

range missiles. It successfully passed its test, shooting down its first missile in a drill Sunday in southern Israel, the military said.



The Iron Dome defense system fires to intercept incoming missiles from Gaza in the port town of Ashdod. Israel successfully tested its newest missile defense system, "David's Sling," Sunday, the military said, a step toward making the third leg of what Israel calls its "multilayer missile defense" operational.

(AP Photo/Tsafrir Abayov)

third leg of what Israel calls its "multilayer missile defense" operational. The "David's Sling" system is designed to stop mid-

The system is designed to intercept projectiles with ranges of up to 300 kilometers (180 miles). Israel has also deployed

Arrow systems for longer-range threats from Iran. The Iron Dome protects against short-range rockets fired by militants in the Gaza Strip and Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon.

Iron Dome shot down hundreds of rockets from Gaza in this month's round of fighting.

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said the success of Iron Dome highlighted the "immense importance" of such systems.

"David's Sling," also known "Magic Wand," is developed by Israel's Rafael Advanced Defense Systems and U.S.-based Raytheon Co. and is primarily designed to counter the large arsenal of Hezbollah rockets in Lebanon.

The military said the program, which is on schedule for deployment in 2014, would "provide an additional layer of defense against ballistic missiles." The next generation of the Arrow, now in the development stage, is set to be deployed in 2016. □

Storms batter England; 800 homes flooded, two killed

LONDON (AP) — Heavy rain and strong winds battered areas of Britain over the weekend, killing two people and flooding 800 homes, officials said Sunday.

A 21-year-old woman died and two others were injured when a large spruce tree collapsed in Exeter, near the southwestern coast, late Saturday. The woman was in a small tent to shelter from the storm when the tree fell on it, police said. She later died at a hospital.

The rains caused the most serious problems in southern England. In nearby Cornwall, people had to briefly evacuate their homes as flood waters and torrential rain battered villages. In Cambridgeshire, a man was driving a car when it plunged into a swollen river in a flooded area. The man was pulled from the water,



A supermarket delivery van ploughs through floodwater in Appleton Roebuck, northern England Sunday Nov. 25, 2012.

(AP Photo/John Giles/PA)

but he died on the way to the hospital.

Hundreds of highways and roads were closed due to the flooding, and several train services were canceled.

Officials said the situation was stabilizing in southern

England, but weather forecasters said persistent rain would continue in the north of England and Scotland on Sunday.

Prime Minister David Cameron pledged that all flood victims would get the help they needed. □

AROUND THE WORLD

Salvation Army's stolen goods recovered

TORONTO (AP) — Toronto police say they have recovered a massive cache of toys and donated goods worth about \$2 million that were stolen from a Salvation Army warehouse and being sold for profit.

Police said Saturday that they had to use three tractor-trailers to haul the items, which were found a day earlier when officers searched a commercial warehouse in Brampton northwest of Toronto. Police say they discovered 146 wooden platforms stacked with items including toys, baby cribs, strollers and food.

It's alleged that up to 100,000 items worth some \$2 million were stolen from a Salvation Army warehouse in north-end Toronto over nearly two years. □

Venezuelan opposition print plant raided

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Government intelligence agents have raided a business printing opposition political pamphlets ahead of next month's state elections in Venezuela. Zulia state Gov. Pablo Perez says the raid by the Bolivarian National Intelligence Service in the western city of Maracaibo is an attempt to intimidate opponents of President Hugo Chavez's government. He told reporters on Saturday that such actions are "abuses of power." The intelligence agency's regional chief Carlos Calderon tells the *anorama* newspaper that agents on Friday found pamphlets that aimed to "sabotage the candidacy" of Francisco Arias Cardenas, a Chavez ally running against Perez in the Dec. 16 elections. □

Pope tells new cardinals to be 'like Jesus'

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Benedict XVI has told his six new cardinals to resist the allure of power and instead be like Jesus and focus their work on spreading the Christian faith. Benedict celebrated a Mass on Sunday in St. Peter's Basilica with the cardinals he formally elevated a day earlier. The six hail from Colombia, India, Lebanon, Nigeria, the Philippines and the U.S. — a broad geographic mix that helps even out the Europe-heavy College of Cardinals. In his homily, Benedict told his new collaborators that Jesus had no political ambitions. He said: "To be like Jesus, then, means not letting ourselves be allured by the worldly logic of power, but bringing into the world the light of truth and God's love." □

Structure collapse kills fair visitor in Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — The official Agencia Brasil news agency reports that the collapse of a metal structure at an agricultural fair has killed a woman and injured three other people in Brazil. It says 64-year-old Adriana Ribeiro de Jesus died of a chest wound after the metal structure that served as the exit from the food court collapsed late Saturday during a burst of strong winds. The Contemporary Rural Brazil fair opened on Wednesday in Rio de Janeiro and was slated to run through Sunday, but organizers decided to close the event following the accident after deciding there wouldn't be enough time to check the structural soundness of all the buildings. □

Serbia's opposition party gets new leader

BELGRADE, Serbia (AP) — Serbia's biggest opposition party, the pro-Western Democrats, have elected Belgrade's popular mayor as the new party leader. Dragan Dijas won overwhelming support in a vote Sunday. He succeeded Boris Tadic, Serbia's former president, who remains the "honorary president" of the Democratic Party. □



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China lands jet on its first aircraft carrier

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BEIJING — The Chinese military has successfully landed a fighter jet on the Liaoning, China's first seaworthy aircraft carrier, according to a report on Sunday by Xinhua, the state news agency.

China Central Television showed video of the jet, the J-15, landing on the deck of the carrier, which was put into service in September after years of construction work. The video also showed the jet, which is painted yellow with the number 552 written in red beneath the cockpit, successfully taking off from the carrier.

Many Chinese and foreigners see the Liaoning as a symbol of China's military modernization and its desire to extend its combat capacity.

But the carrier will not be combat-ready for some time, and foreign military analysts say China's military abilities and budget still lag far behind those of the United States, which is China's greatest rival for influence in the western Pacific.

China bought the carrier years ago from Ukraine,

where it had been called the Varyag. The Xinhua report said the carrier had undergone a series of "sailing and technological tests"

completed more than 100 training and test programs. The report said the J-15 jet was designed and made in China and is the nation's

ground missiles, as well as precision-guided bombs, Xinhua reported. The jet is comparable to Russia's Su-33 and the United States'



A carrier-borne J-15 fighter jet lands on China's first aircraft carrier, the Liaoning. China has successfully landed a fighter jet on its first aircraft carrier, which entered service two months ago, the country's official news agency confirmed Sunday. The Liaoning aircraft carrier underscores China's ambitions to be a leading Asian naval power, but it is not expected to carry a full complement of planes or be ready for combat for some time.

(AP Photo/Xinhua, Zha Chunming)

since Sept. 25, when it was formally put into service by the People's Liberation Army, whose navy is modernizing more rapidly than any other military branch. Xinhua said the carrier had

"first generation multipurpose carrier-borne fighter jet." It is able to carry anti-ship, air-to-air and air-to-

F-18, according to Xinhua. For years, the threat of hostilities in the Taiwan Strait drove much of the Chi-

nese navy's modernization plans, and the risk of a conflict there involving both U.S. and Taiwanese forces occupies a singular place in Chinese military strategy and planning. But Chinese civilian leaders and generals are also focused these days on the rising tensions with neighboring nations over disputed territory. This autumn, tensions with Japan over the Diaoyu Islands, which the Japanese administer and call the Senkakus, rose sharply when the Japanese government announced that it was buying the islands. There have also been diplomatic and maritime clashes with Vietnam and the Philippines over territory in the South China Sea, which is believed to be rich in oil, gas and fish. Several Southeast Asian nations dispute Chinese and Taiwanese claims to large parts of the South China Sea. Foreign military officials and analysts are carefully watching China's development of other warfare technology, including an anti-ship ballistic missile. □

No Powerball winner; jackpot now at \$425M

The Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Lottery officials say nobody has won the Powerball jackpot and the top prize will now increase to about \$425 million for the next drawing, the largest jackpot ever for the game.

Iowa Lottery spokeswoman Mary Neubauer said sales were strong over the holiday week for Saturday's drawing, which was estimated at \$325 mil-

lion before the numbers were picked. That was the fourth-largest jackpot in the game's history.

Neubauer says the jackpot for Wednesday's drawing could go even higher than the estimated \$425 million because sales pick up in the days before record drawings. The previous top Powerball prize was \$365 million, won in 2006 by ConAgra Foods Workers in Lincoln, Nebraska. □

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Mass. utility worker pierced pipe before gas blast

SPRINGFIELD, Massachusetts (AP) — A utility worker responding to reports of a natural gas leak in one of the largest cities in the northeastern New England states punctured a pipe and an unknown spark ignited a massive explosion that injured 18 people and damaged 42 buildings, the state fire marshal announced Sunday.

Friday night's natural gas blast in Springfield's entertainment district was caused by "human error," State Fire Marshal Stephen Coan said at a news conference. He didn't name the Columbia Gas Co. worker who pierced the high-pressure pipe.

The worker was trying to locate the source of the leak with a metal probe that tests natural gas levels when the probe damaged the underground pipe, Coan said. A flood of gas then built up in a building that housed a strip club,



A firetruck stands in debris at the site of a gas explosion that leveled a strip club in Springfield, Mass., on Friday evening. Investigators were trying to figure out what caused the blast where the multistory brick building housing Scores Gentleman's Club once stood.

(AP Photo/David Molnar)

and a spark touched off the blast, officials said.

Columbia Gas planned a news conference for later Sunday afternoon. A message left for a company spokesman wasn't immediately returned. Columbia Gas, a subsidiary of public company NiSource Inc., announced earlier Sunday that it planned to

open a claims center for residents and businesses affected by the explosion at City Hall on Monday. Preliminary reports showed the blast damaged 42

buildings with 115 residential units. Three buildings were immediately condemned, and 24 others require additional inspections by structural engineers to determine whether they are safe. The building that housed the Scores Gentleman's Club was completely destroyed.

After the pipe was ruptured, authorities evacuated several buildings. Most of the people injured were part of a group of gas workers, firefighters and police officers who ducked for cover behind a utility truck just before the blast. The truck was demolished.

Some officials said it was a miracle no one was killed. Springfield Fire Commissioner Joseph Conant praised the actions of city firefighters. "The firefighters did an excellent job evacuating the area which certainly prevented additional civilian injuries and saved many lives," Conant said. □

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CASINO AND SHOPS

Anthony detectives overlooked Google search

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — The Florida sheriff's office that investigated the disappearance of Casey Anthony's 2-year-old daughter overlooked evidence that

who was acquitted of the girl's murder in 2011. Anthony's attorneys argued during trial that Casey Anthony helped her father, George Anthony, cover up the girl's drown-



Casey Anthony, front right, walks out of the Orange County Jail with her attorney Jose Baez, left, during her release in Orlando, Fla., after being acquitted of murder in the death of her daughter Caylee. The Florida sheriff's office that investigated Caylee Anthony's death confirmed Sunday, Nov. 25, 2012, that it overlooked a computer search for suffocation methods made from the little girl's home on the day she was last seen alive.

(AP Photo/Red Huber, Pool)

someone in their home did a Google search for "fool-proof" suffocation methods on the day the girl was last seen alive.

Orange County sheriff's Capt. Angelo Nieves said Sunday that the office's computer investigator missed the June 16, 2008, search. The agency's admission was first reported by Orlando television station WKMG. It's not known who performed the search. The station reported it was done on a browser primarily used by the 2-year-old's mother, Casey Anthony,

ing in the family pool. WKMG reports that sheriff's investigators pulled 17 vague entries only from the computer's Internet Explorer browser, not the Mozilla Firefox browser commonly used by Casey Anthony. More than 1,200 Firefox entries, including the suffocation search, were overlooked.

Whoever conducted the Google search looked for the term "fool-proof suffocation," misspelling "suffocation," and then clicked on an article about suicide that discussed taking poi-

son and putting a bag over one's head. The browser then recorded activity on the social networking site MySpace, which was used by Casey Anthony but not her father. A computer expert for Anthony's defense team found the search before the trial. Her lead attorney, Jose Baez, first mentioned the search in his book about the case but suggested it was George Anthony who conducted the search after Caylee drowned because he wanted to kill himself. Not knowing about the computer search, prosecutors had argued Caylee was poisoned with chloroform and then suffocated by duct tape placed over her mouth and nose. The girl's body was found six months after she dis-

appeared in a field near the family home and was too decomposed for an exact cause of death to be determined. Prosecutors presented evidence that someone in the Anthony home searched online for how to make chloroform, but Casey Anthony's mother, Cindy, claimed on the witness stand that she had done the searches by mistake while looking up information about chlorophyll. Many jurors apparently went into hiding amid public outrage over the verdict and refused to comment, but two have said prosecutors couldn't conclusively prove how Caylee died. Prosecutors Linda Drane Burdick and Jeff Ashton didn't respond to emails from The Associated Press on Sunday. □

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Benefits fight brings lesbian couple to US high court

LISA LEFF

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A San Francisco couple is waiting to find out if the U.S. Supreme Court will take their case challenging the 1996 law that prohibits the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriages.

Karen Golinski and her partner of 23 years, Amy Cunningham, got married during the brief window in 2008 when gay and lesbian couples could tie the knot in California. Within weeks of their wedding, Golinski applied to add her spouse to her employer-sponsored health care plan, a move that would save the couple thousands of dollars a year.

Her ordinarily routine request still is being debated

more than four years later, and by the likes of former



Amy Cunningham, left, and Karen Golinski, pose at a park by their home in San Francisco. All Golinski wanted was to enroll her spouse in her employer-sponsored health plan. Four years later, her request still is being debated. Because Golinski is married to another woman and she works for the federal government, her personal personnel problem has morphed into a multi-pronged legal attack by gay rights activists to overturn the 1996 law that defines marriage as the union of a man and a woman.

(AP Photo/Eric Risberg)

attorneys general, a slew of senators, the Obama administration and possibly this week, the U.S. Supreme Court.

Because Golinski is married to another woman and works for the U.S. government, her claim for benefits has morphed into a multi-layered legal challenge to the 1996 law that prohibits the federal government from recognizing same-sex unions like hers.

The high court has scheduled a closed-door conference for Friday to review Golinski's case and four others that also seek to overturn the Defense of Marriage Act overwhelmingly approved by Congress and signed by Presi-

dent Bill Clinton. The purpose of the meeting is to decide which, if any, to put on the court's schedule for arguments next year.

The outcome carries economic and social consequences for gay, lesbian and bisexual couples, who now are unable to access Social Security survivor benefits, file joint income taxes, inherit a deceased spouse's pension or obtain family health insurance.

The other plaintiffs in the cases pending before the court include the state of Massachusetts, 13 couples and five widows and widowers. "It's pretty monumental and it's an honor," said Golinski, a staff lawyer for the federal appeals court based in San Francisco. The federal trial courts that heard the cases all ruled the Defense of Marriage Act act violates the civil rights of legally married gays and lesbians. Two appellate courts agreed, making it highly likely the high court will agree to hear at least one of the appeals, Lambda Legal Executive Director Jon Davidson said.

"I don't think we've ever had an occasion where the Supreme Court has had so many gay rights cases knocking at its door," said Davidson, whose gay legal advocacy group represents Golinski. "That in and of itself shows how far we've come."

The Supreme Court also is scheduled to discuss Friday whether it should take two more long-simmering cases dealing with relationship recognition for same-sex couples. □

Republican opposition to Rice begins to crack

Continued from front

The assault killed four Americans, including the U.S. ambassador to Libya.

At issue is Rice's account — as the administration's representative on the Sunday television talk shows on Sept. 16 — that the violence was the spontaneous result of a mob angered by an anti-Muslim video made in the U.S. and posted on YouTube. She said she relied on talking points provided by the intelligence community that were later discredited.

"I think she deserves the ability and the opportunity to explain herself and her position," McCain told "Fox News Sunday." "But she's not the problem. The problem is the president of the United States" who misled

the public on terrorist involvement.

McCain's remarks were in contrast to his previous stance that Rice wasn't qualified to replace Hillary Rodham Clinton, who is expected to step down soon as the top U.S. diplomat, and that he would do "whatever is necessary" to block Rice's possible nomination.

Rice is widely seen as Obama's first choice for the job as secretary of State. As the top Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee, McCain would have considerable sway in the Senate's screening of Rice.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, McCain's close friend and colleague on the committee, told ABC "This Week" that he still suspects the White



Republican opposition to Rice begins to crack

House intentionally glossed over obvious terrorist links in the attack to keep voters from questioning Obama's handling of national security.

But instead of repeating his prior assertion that he was "dead set" against a Rice promotion, Graham suggested he looked forward to hearing her out. □



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Fewer moderates will make deals harder in Congress

ALAN FRAM

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When the next Congress convenes in January, there will be more women, many new faces and 11 fewer tea party-backed conservative House Republicans from the class of 2010 who lost their bid for a second term.

Overriding those changes, though, is a thinning of pragmatic, centrist veterans in both parties. Among those leaving are some of the Senate's most pragmatic lawmakers, nearly half the House's centrist Blue Dog Democrats and several moderate House Republicans.

That could leave the parties more polarized even as President Barack Obama and congressional leaders talk up the cooperation needed to tackle complex, vexing problems such as curbing deficits, revamping tax laws and culling savings from Medicare, which provides health care coverage for the elderly, and other costly, popular programs.

"This movement away from the center, at a time when issues have to be resolved from the middle, makes it much more difficult to find solutions to major problems," said William Hoagland, senior vice president of the Bipartisan Policy Center, a private group advocating compromise.

In the Senate, moderate Scott Brown lost in Massachusetts to Democrat Elizabeth Warren, who will be one of the most liberal members. Another Republican moderate, Richard Lugar of Indiana, fell in the primary election. Two others, Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas and Olympia Snowe of Maine, are retiring. Moderate Democratic senators such as Kent Conrad

of North Dakota, Herb Kohl of Wisconsin, Ben Nelson of Nebraska, and James Webb of Virginia are leaving, as is Democratic-leaning independent Joe Lieberman of Connecticut. While about half the incoming 12 Senate freshmen of both parties are moderates, new arrivals include tea party Republican Ted Cruz of Texas, conservative Deb Fischer of Nebraska, and liberals such as Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin and Hawaii's Mazie Hirono. There's a similar pattern in the House, where 10 of the 24 moderate Democratic Blue Dogs lost, are retiring or, in the case of Rep. Joe Donnelly of Indiana are moving to the Senate. That will further slash a centrist group that just a few years ago had more than 50 members, though some new freshmen might join. Among Republicans, moderates like Reps. Judy Biggert of Illinois and New Hampshire's Charles Bass were defeated while others such as Reps. Jerry Lewis of California and Steven LaTourette of Ohio decided to retire. "Congress seems to be going in the opposite direction of the country, just as the country is screaming for solutions to gridlock," said Democratic strategist Phil Singer. Whether the changes are good is often in the eye of the beholder.

Seventy-one of the 83 House Republican freshmen of 2010 were re-elected on Nov. 6, but 11 lost, including one of the group's highest profile members, conservative Rep. Allen West of Florida. Another faces a runoff in December. The Republicans' success in 2010 was fueled by the conservative tea party movement which supports limited government, deep



Sen-elect Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., left, and Sen-elect, current Rep. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis. walking together on Capitol Hill in Washington. When the next Congress cranks up in January, there will be more women, many new faces and 11 fewer of the tea party-backed 2010 House GOP freshmen who sought re-election. Overriding those changes, though, is a thinning of pragmatic, centrist veterans in both parties. Among those leaving are some of the Senate's most pragmatic lawmakers in both parties, nearly half the House's centrist Blue Dog Democrats and several moderate House Republicans.

(AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais)

cuts in government spending, and more tax cuts.

"Some of the people who are the anti-government ideologues, some of them are gone," said House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi. "And that message has been rejected by the American people."

Sal Russo, strategist for the Tea Party Express, said such departures would be balanced by newly elected conservatives, including the Senate's Cruz and House Republicans Ted Yoho of Florida and Mark Meadows of North Carolina. "Pretty much everybody that ran in 2012 was talking about the economic woes we face, stopping excessive spending, controlling unsustainable debt," he said. □



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112 dead in Bangladesh garment factory blaze

JULHAS ALAM

Associated Press

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP)

— At least 112 people were killed in a fire that raced through a multi-story garment factory just outside of Bangladesh's capital, Dhaka, an official said Sunday. The blaze broke out late Saturday at the eight-story factory operated by Tazreen Fashions Ltd., a subsidiary of the Tuba Group, which supplies Walmart and other major retailers in the U.S. and Europe.

By Sunday morning, firefighters had recovered 100 bodies, fire department Operations Director Maj. Mohammad Mahbub told The Associated Press. He said another 12 people who had suffered injuries after jumping from the building to escape the fire later died at hospitals. The death toll could rise as the search for victims was continuing, he said.

Local media reported that up to 124 people were killed in the fire. The cause of the blaze was not immediately clear, and authorities have ordered an investigation.

Army soldiers and paramilitary border guards were deployed to help police keep the situation under control as thousands of onlookers and anxious relatives of the factory workers gathered at the

scene, Mahbub said. He would not say how many people were still missing. Tazreen was given a "high risk" safety rating after May 16, 2011, audit

said online documents indicating that the factory received an orange or "high risk" assessment after the May 2011 inspection and a yellow or "medium risk"

clear if that inspection had been conducted, or if the factory was still making products for Wal-Mart. If a factory is rated "orange" three times in a



A Bangladeshi woman cries as she claims the body of her relative killed in a fire at a garment factory outside Dhaka, Bangladesh, Sunday Nov. 25, 2012. At least 112 people were killed in a late Saturday night fire that raced through the multi-story garment factory just outside of Bangladesh's capital, an official said Sunday.

(AP Photo/ Jibon Amir)

conducted by an ethical sourcing assessor for Wal-Mart, according to a document posted on the Tuba Group's website. It did not specify the conditions or violations that led to the rating. A spokesman for Wal-Mart

report after an inspection in August 2011 appeared to pertain to the factory where the fire occurred. The August 2011 letter said Wal-Mart would conduct another inspection within one year. Spokesman Kevin Gardner said it was not

two-year period, Wal-Mart won't place any orders for one year. The May 2011 report was the first orange rating for the factory. There was no indication whether the violations had been fixed since the May inspection. □

19 bodies found in northern Mexico border state

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico

(AP) — The slain bodies of 19 people have been discovered in Mexico's northern border state of Chihuahua, officials reported Sunday, including 11 apparently long-dead men found in mass graves and eight others who were apparently tortured and killed in recent days.

The state prosecutor's of-

fice for missing people said 11 male bodies were found in Ejido Jesus Carranza, near the U.S. border about 25 miles (40 kilometers) southeast of Ciudad Juarez. The area of sand dunes is a popular spot for picnickers from Juarez, which is just across the border from El Paso, Texas. Officials say they apparently were buried two

years ago at the height of battles between drug gangs seeking to control routes across the border. Federal statistics showed more than 3,000 people were killed that year in Ciudad Juarez, a city of 1.4 million, making it one of the most dangerous places on earth.

Prosecutors also said Sunday that officials had found eight bodies tossed along

a road near Rosales, about 120 miles (200 kilometers) southwest of Ojinaga, Texas. The agency said the men apparently were kidnapped on Friday and were discovered on Saturday. It said they had been shot in the head after being tortured. Some had been burned, beaten and had eyes carved out. □

Gaza: Cleric claims violations of truce 'sinful'

IBRAHIM BARZAK

Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)

— A leading Islamic cleric in the Gaza Strip has ruled it a sin to violate the recent cease-fire between Israel and the Hamas militant group that governs the Palestinian territory — according a religious legitimacy to the truce and giving the Gaza government strong backing to enforce it.

The fatwa, or religious edict, was issued late Saturday by Suleiman al-Daya, a cleric respected by both ultra-conservative Salafis and Hamas.

Salafi groups oppose political accommodations with Israel.

"Honoring the truce, which was sponsored by our Egyptian brethren, is the duty of each and every one of us. Violating it shall constitute a sin," the fatwa read.

The truce, which was struck Wednesday to bring an end to an eight-day Israeli offensive against Gaza militants who fired rockets into Israel, remains fragile, however, and details beyond the initial cease-fire have not yet been worked out.

The fighting killed 169 Palestinians, including dozens of civilians, and six Israelis.

The spokesman for Gaza's Hamas government, Taher Nunu, told reporters Sunday that Hamas is committed to the truce.

"The government reaffirmed its blessing to the agreement sponsored by Cairo and emphasized that it will work to the internal Palestinian consensus and the supreme national interest," he said, following a government meeting. □

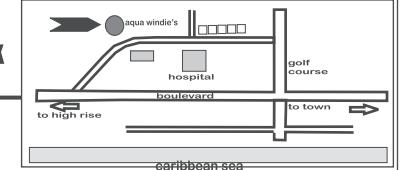
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EURO BRIEFS

German official calls for tougher banking policies

BERLIN (AP) — Germany's chief financial regulator is backing calls for tougher rules on banks' government debt holdings, but says they shouldn't be rushed.

Jens Weidmann, the head of Germany's central bank, last week said banks should have to secure those bonds — viewed before Europe's debt crisis as a safe asset — with capital of their own and advocated an unspecified limit on banks' involvement with government creditors. He argued that would help prevent governments and banks amplifying each other's problems.

Elke Koenig, who heads Germany's BaFin financial regulator, was quoted Sunday as telling newspaper Welt am Sonntag it's a problem "that no capital has to be held back for government bonds" and that needs to change long-term. But she added: "The question is, when is the right point to change it?"

ECB pushes for EU approval of Greek aid deal

BERLIN (AP) — A top European Central Bank official says he hopes eurozone countries will clear the way Monday for Greece to receive its next aid installment, stressing that a deal will require movement from all involved.

Eurozone finance ministers are trying to reach a deal after failing last week. Athens needs the next batch of rescue loans to avoid bankruptcy, but creditors have differed over how to finance giving it more time to get its house in order. □

Morsi's judicial decree draws high-level dissent

DAVID D. KIRKPATRICK

© 2012 New York Times

CAIRO — New cracks emerged in the government of President Mohammed Morsi of Egypt on Sunday over his decree claiming power beyond the review of any court in the country, which has been met with loud protests.

While Morsi defended his decree and insisted that it was only temporary, his justice minister began arguing publicly for a retreat that might defuse an escalating battle between Egypt's new Islamist leaders and the institutions of its old secular-authoritarian government.

The justice minister, Ahmed Mekki, is an influential former leader of the movement for judicial independence under Hosni Mubarak, and is now one of Morsi's closest advisers. He told two television talk shows late Saturday night that he objected to the scope of the president's decree, which his opponents say could be a first step toward a new Islamist

autocracy.

The president's office has said the decree was needed to protect the democratically-chosen constituent assembly that is trying

narrower edict — one that did not assert sweeping immunity from judicial review on other matters, the feature of the decree Morsi issued on Thursday that has



Protesters throw rocks towards riot police in downtown Cairo, Nov. 25, 2012. The Egyptian justice minister joined criticism of a sweeping edict issued Thursday by President Mohamed Morsi that exempted the president's decrees from judicial review until ratification of a constitution.

(Tara Todras-Whitehill/The New York Times)

to write a new Egyptian Constitution from Mubarak-appointed judges who appeared poised to dissolve it. Mekki said that he supported that goal but that the president could accomplish it with a much

prompted the loudest protests.

Morsi, Egypt's first freely elected president and a former leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, now faces a

test of his ability and willingness to engage in the kind of compromise that democratic government requires.

But he also faces real doubts about the willingness of his secular-minded opponents to join him in compromise.

Each side is mired in suspicion of the other, a legacy of the decades when the Brotherhood survived here only as an insular secret society, demonized as dangerous radicals by most of the Egyptian elite.

"There is a deep mistrust," said Emad Shahin, a political scientist at the American University in Cairo who studies the Brotherhood. "It is an ugly round of partisan politics," he said, "a bone-crushing phase."

Some conflicting signals emerged Sunday from people close to the president, while street protests continued in Cairo and Egypt's stock market fell sharply, driven by investors' concerns about increased instability. □

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matinee: 12:15 2:30
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Syrian rebels capture air base near Damascus

BASSEM MROUE
Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Syrian rebels captured a helicopter base just outside Damascus Sunday in what an activist called a "blow to the morale of the regime" near President Bashar Assad's seat of power.

The takeover claim showed how rebels are advancing in the area of the capital, though they are badly outgunned, making inroads where Assad's power was once unchallenged. Rebels have also been able to fire mortar rounds into Damascus recently.

The director of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, Rami Abdul-Rahman, said rebels seized control of the Marj al-Sultan base on the outskirts of Damascus on Sunday morning. He said at least 15 rebels and eight soldiers were killed in the fighting that started a day earlier. The rebels later withdrew from the base.

Rebels appear to be try-

ing to take over air bases and destroy aircraft in order to prevent the regime from using them in attacks against opposition forces

positions.

Rebels have been attacking air bases in different parts of Syria, mostly in the northern regions of Idlib



Syrian President Bashar Assad, left, stands next to Iran's parliament speaker Ali Larijani, right, as he speaks to reporters, in Damascus, Syria. Syrian rebels captured a helicopter base just outside Damascus Sunday in what an activist called a "blow to the morale of the regime" near President Bashar Assad's seat of power.

(AP Photo/SANA)

around the country.

The rebels have no protection against the attack helicopters and fighter jets that have been blasting their

and Aleppo.

In the battle at the base outside Damascus, Abdul-Rahman and Damascus-based activist Maath al-

Shami said rebels destroyed two helicopters with rocket propelled grenades and captured a tank. They say the base, which is on the eastern outskirts of Damascus, houses several radar positions. "This is a blow to the morale of the regime, because it is close to the heart of the capital," said Abdul-Rahman, referring to the base that is about 15 kilometers (10 miles) from Damascus.

Al-Shami said the rebels withdrew from the base after they captured some ammunition. He said they feared counterstrikes by regime aircraft.

An amateur video posted online showed rebels walking next to two destroyed helicopters. At least three other helicopters appeared undamaged. Black smoke billowed in the distance. Another video showed several radar posts on hills inside the large compound. Parked military trucks stood inside as rebels roamed freely. The activist videos

appeared genuine and corresponded to other AP reporting about the events depicted. Syria restricts the access of reporters.

The Observatory also reported violence in other parts of Syria, including the country's largest city of Aleppo in the north and the capital itself.

It said rebels on Sunday captured a training base for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command near the Damascus suburb of Douma. The PFLP-GC is one of the Palestinian factions most loyal to Assad.

The PFLP-GC said in a statement late Saturday that the base was under attack. It said that thousands of activists and fighters who fought against Israel were trained at the base over the past 30 years.

Also Sunday, the Observatory said a bomb targeted a bus in the southern village of Othman, killing at least five people and wounding dozens. □

Twin suicide bombs at Nigeria military base kill 11

GODWIN ATTAH
YINKA IBUKUN
Associated Press

KADUNA, Nigeria (AP) — Twin suicide car bombs exploded Sunday at a church inside one of Nigeria's top military bases, killing at least 11 people and wounding another 30 in an embarrassing attack showing the continued insecurity that haunts Africa's most populous nation. No one immediately claimed re-

sponsibility for the attacks, but suspicion immediately fell on the radical Islamist sect known as Boko Haram, whose suicide bombers target Sunday worship services in what has become a weekly macabre routine in Nigeria. This attack in Jaji on Sunday, however, happened inside a barracks home to the Armed Forces Command and Staff College, one of the country's most important military

colleges. It also showed a new dangerous sophistication as the second explosion appeared timed to target responders rushing to aid the wounded 10 minutes after the first blast, officials said. The attack began just after noon and targeted the St. Andrew Military Protestant Church, Brig. Gen. Bola Koleoso said. A bus loaded with explosives somehow made it inside the barracks' perim-

eter and rammed into the church's walls before exploding, Koleoso said. The second blast came from a sedan parked nearby and struck in the chaos afterward as emergency workers, soldiers and survivors of the first blast milled around the church, he said. "Investigation into the bombings have commenced and the area already (has been) cordoned off," Koleoso said in a text message

sent to journalists after the attack. The military kept journalists away from the scene of the blast and took the wounded to military clinics, limiting independent verification of what happened in the attack. Yushau Shuaib, a spokesman for Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency, would only say an explosion happened at the base and referred all questions to the military. □

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Congo negotiating with M23 rebels Uganda

PETE JONES
R.MUHUMUZA
Associated Press

KAMPALA, Uganda (AP)

— Congolese officials are in talks Sunday with representatives of M23, the rebel group that last week took control of the eastern Congo city of Goma, according to Ugandan officials.

Ugandan Defence Minister Crispus Kiyonga said that he is mediating discussions to help both sides reach a settlement that would end a violent rebellion that has sucked in Uganda and Rwanda, which both face charges of backing the rebels.

M23 President Jean-Marie Runiga is leading the rebels in the talks, according to Rene Abandi, M23's head of external relations.

Abandi, who is now based in the Ugandan capital Kampala, said M23 representatives met with Congolese President Joseph Kabila in a tense, two-hour meeting that was also attended by Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni.

"He tried to accuse us and we also tried to accuse him," Abandi said of the meeting with Kabila on Saturday. "It was a meeting to have a common understanding of the principle of negotiation. (Kabila) said he's ready to negotiate directly with us."

But some Congolese officials in the capital Kinshasa have said there will be no talks with the rebels unless they quit Goma. A regional summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region in Kampala

of Goma. The Congolese army attacked the town Saturday, but M23 retained control.

M23 President Runiga said that withdrawal from Goma was "under consideration" and, while M23



Congolese government soldiers (FARDC) patrol the streets of Minova under their control, Sunday Nov. 25, 2012. Congolese officials are in talks Sunday with representatives of M23, the rebel group that last week took control of the eastern Congo city of Goma, according to Ugandan officials.

(AP Photo/Jerome Delay)

— attended by both Kabila and Museveni — on Saturday called on the rebels to leave Goma and urged Kabila to listen to the "legitimate grievances" of M23. Despite the regional leaders' demands for the rebel forces to withdraw from Goma, M23 soldiers were visibly in control of the city Sunday. M23 also still held Sake, a contested town 25 kilometers (15 miles) west

did not oppose the idea "in principle," no decision had been taken yet, according to M23 spokesman Lt. Col. Vianney Kazarama, speaking to the Associated Press. Runiga is still in Kampala and no official response to the demands from the regional summit is expected before his return to Congo, said Kazarama in Goma. "We are waiting to hear from Runiga when he will

be back from Kampala," said Kazarama.

"Since May we have asked to meet with President Kabila," said Amani Kabasha, M23's deputy spokesman. "At least now there has been contact. The

door is open for talks to find the durable peace that eastern Congo needs." Government troops remain in Minova, 25 kilometers (15 miles) south of Sake, following a failed attack on M23 last Thursday. □



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Jamaica Senator says shun food imports

KINGSTON, Jamaica (AP)

— A Jamaican senator who leads the island's agricultural society is urging citizens to abstain from buying imported food this Christmas season.

Sen. Norman Grant says that all Jamaicans have a responsibility to protect the island's agriculture sector. Grant said Sunday "there

is no need to look to imported food" this Christmas because local farmers are capable of providing everything.

Dependence on imported food has ballooned for years in Jamaica and other Caribbean countries. Besides urging islanders to buy locally grown food, the government has given

away seedlings and gardening kits to encourage people to tend to backyard plots to save money and ease dependence on imports.

Caribbean tastes have been turning toward wheat and other staples from aboard rather than local crops such as yams and cassava. □

Curacao's Historic Jewish cemetery crumbling

KAREN ATTIAH

Associated Press

WILLEMSTAD, Curacao (AP)

— Headstones are pock-marked, their inscriptions faded. Stone slabs that have covered tombs for centuries are crumbling. White marble has turned grey, likely from the acrid smoke that spews from a nearby oil refinery.

One of the oldest Jewish cemeteries in the Western Hemisphere, Beth Haim on the island of Curacao, is slowly fading in the Caribbean sun.

Beth Haim was established in the 17th century and is considered an important landmark even on an island so rich in history that its downtown has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The sparsely populated island of nearly 150,000 people just north of Venezuela is known today mostly as a diving destination or for its namesake blue liqueur made from citrus fruit.

With its lavish monuments and multilingual epitaphs, Curacao's cemetery helps tell the little-known history of Jews in the Caribbean who fled Spain and Portugal to escape the Inquisition aimed at ridding the Christian nations of Jews, Muslims and others people deemed heretics. Many of the exiles first found refuge in the Netherlands, with their descendants later settling in this former Dutch colony, now a highly diverse society and a semi-autonomous part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

But the landmark is in danger. The steady erosion, likely intensified by the proximity of the antiquated refinery, is now considered unstoppable, said Rene Maduro, president of the Mikve Israel-Emanuel Synagogue, which owns and maintains the cemetery.

"Believe me, I wish there was something we could do to protect the cemetery," said Maduro, whose family came to Curacao in the 1600s and has 75 to 100 ancestors buried in Beth Haim. "It is beyond the point of repair."

The Curacao cemetery is among several at-risk bur-

ial sites that "preserve the cultural, ethnic, biographical and religious history" of Jews in the Caribbean, said Rachel Frankel, a New York architect who has studied and documented historic Jewish sites throughout the Americas, including burial grounds in Jamaica and Suriname. The Curacao congregation is considering preserving the cemetery electronically by setting up a website with records and photos, Madu-

dred, and other locations in the thousands, said Frankel. By the mid-20th century, most of the congregations had declined, but the cemeteries that in some cases had accepted burials for more than two centuries remained.

The Jewish community in Curacao dates back to the 1650s, with the arrival of Sephardic Jews from Amsterdam who had previously fled Spain and Portugal. At its peak, in the late 1700s,

than 5,000 people are buried there, but only a third of the inscriptions are legible in a mix of languages that includes Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch and Hebrew. Also vanishing are some of the engravings known as sepulchral illustrations, some of which are considered artworks.

Ivan Becher, president of the Shaarek Tsedek synagogue in Willemstad, said his grandfather was among the last to be buried in Beth



A portion of the Beth Haim cemetery, backdropped by the Isla oil refinery, is seen in Blenheim, on the outskirts of Willemstad, Curacao. Beth Haim, believed to be one of the oldest Jewish cemeteries in the Western Hemisphere, established in the 1650s and considered an important landmark on an island where the historic downtown has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is slowly fading in the Caribbean sun.

(AP Photo/Karen Attiah)

ro said. The plan for a digital memorial is still in development, but a lower-tech effort has put replicas of 10 of the most ornate headstones on display at the Jewish Historical Museum in the capital of Willemstad. Besides being sacred sites, Frankel said, the cemeteries help document the Caribbean migration of Sephardic Jews whose forefathers fled or were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula during the Inquisition, and Ashkenazic Jews who later left central and eastern Europe to seek their fortunes in the New World. Along with Curacao and Jamaica, large populations of Jews were once found on the smaller Dutch island of St. Eustatius, as well as in St. Thomas and Barbados. On some islands, colonial Jews numbered in the hun-

the Jewish community on the island numbered about 2,000.

They established the Mikve Israel-Emanuel Synagogue, which is billed as the oldest continually operating synagogue in the Western Hemisphere, as well as Beth Haim cemetery. The synagogue today has about 350 members, of which only about 200 actually live on Curacao. An orthodox synagogue in another part of Willemstad has a membership of about 60 families.

The cemetery occupies what was once plantation land on about 10 acres on the outskirts of Willemstad. The oldest confirmed inscription is from 1668 on a stone made of potter's clay, according to records maintained by the synagogue. Congregation members have determined more

Haim nearly 60 years ago. Experts who have studied the headstones say the deterioration is caused by a combination of factors, including wind, salt air and humidity, said Michael A. Newton, an architect who works with the Curacao Monuments Foundation, a preservation group.

Many on the island also blame the oil refinery that towers over the cemetery and on many days spews sooty clouds that burn the eyes of visitors to Beth Haim as well as those of residents in the poor neighborhoods of the area.

A spokesman for the refinery, which is owned by the Curacao government and operated under contract by Venezuela's state-owned oil company, did not return calls seeking comment. □

Haiti's veterans in hiding renew vow to mobilize

TRENTON DANIEL

Associated Press

MARIANI, Haiti (AP) —

The leaders of a small group of ex-soldiers who embarrassed Haiti's government earlier this year by seizing old military bases to press for the restoration of the disbanded army emerged from six months of hiding Saturday to renew their demand.

Contacted on their cellphones after several months of keeping them off, four former sergeants arranged to meet with The Associated Press on a hillside clearing in Mariani, a beach resort town southwest of the Caribbean nation's capital.

They said the group's members have been training at the site.

The meeting came a day after Haiti's Ministry of Defense issued a statement warning the group not to cause disruptions.

The ex-soldiers said they planned to press their campaign without violence.

"They know we can tear down the country — easily," said one of the former sergeants, David Dorne, 44.

"But if we destroyed this country where are we going to go?"

The National Armed Forces of Haiti was abolished in 1995 because of its history of toppling governments and crushing dissent.

Many veterans have long complained that they're owed \$15 million in pensions and lost wages. After police took back the illegally occupied old bases in May, leaders of the ragtag group of former soldiers and their young recruits stashed their camouflage uniforms and pistols and returned to their day jobs.

The ex-sergeants said they spent the time reorganizing and preparing to renew their campaign to demand that President Michel Martelly's government honor his campaign pledge to re-establish the military and appoint one of them as commander. □

LOCAL Aruba TODAY

Contemporary local art converts Aruba Airport into Aruba Artport:

Beautiful Sculpture Garden inaugurated at Aruba's Queen Beatrix Airport



-Permanent exhibition for passengers and airport visitors

ORANJESTAD – Visitors to Aruba will have something to talk about before they leave the island. Part of their last impression of the island will be an impressive collection of sculptural art pieces that are now adorning the garden corridor of the airport. Local artists were honored in a ceremony Friday night at the Sculpture Garden. Minister of Tourism and Transport Otmar Oduber and Minister of Economic and Cultural Affairs were accompanied by CEO of the Aruba Airport Authority Peter Steinmetz, members of the Air Art Committee and surrounded by the artist, cutting the ribbon marking the official opening of the Sculpture Garden. The Minister of Tourism and Transportation in his speech explained, "It has been the vision of the Government and of the Aruba Airport Authority to incorporate arts & culture of an elevated quality at the airport. The goal is to boost appreciation for our cultural and artistic expressions, to create authentic experiences, to endorse our artists, to educate, and also to generate a feeling of island warmth and welcome at the airport." He was followed by the Minister of



Economic and Cultural Affairs Michelle Hooyboer-Winklaar who was proud of the contribution of the artists and happy to see the integration of what our island has to offer culturally with the experience of our visitors. Finally CEO of the Aruba Airport Authority Peter Steinmetz stated: "That it is a unique combination of state of the art airport development and local culture. Ever since we have been working on the airport, we introduced innovation, change, and transformation all to serve the passenger better. Our target has been to create and iconic feature which can serve as a role model for the Aruban Society and we had a simple plan, use design to create modernization and combine it with the local contemporary Aruban Culture." He went on to thank the contributing artists for making the Sculpture Garden a reality. Special words of appreciation also went to the Air Art Committee: Mesdames Claudia Ruiz-Vazquez and



Myrna Jansen and Messrs. Adi Martis, Ciro Abath and Stanley Kuiperi. This airport committee was installed to advise the airport on promoting and stimulating the context of artworks at the airports public areas. The unveiling was preceded by a short video about AAA's artistic design journey.

Every art piece was unveiled with a special original dance performance conceived by Club di Movimiento choreographer Samantha Westera with more than a little help from Alydia Wever and Wilma Kuiperi; the unveiling show ended with a special performance by the Flash Mob. After the performances each artist involved further explained every art piece in detail. Invited guests marveled at the continued improvements at the airport. The seven sculptures, "Living Garden" by Ciro Abath, "Dancing with the Wind" by Miriam de L'Isle, "Double Nothing" by Ryan Oduber, "Look an Iguana" by Omaira Silva, "A Tribute to the Aruban People" by Gilbert Senchi, "Love is in the Air" by Osaira Muyale and "Message from the Cave" by Stanley Kuiperi, form a permanent exhibition that can be seen daily at the airport's sculpture garden, located just behind the 14-Bis Restaurant. □

Hot Cyber Monday Deals await in Sunny Aruba!

ORANJESTAD - As U.S. residents plan to escape the cold and retreat to the heat, Aruba invites visitors to cash in on several hot hotel deals this Cyber Monday and beyond. From luxury high-rise resorts on the popular Palm Beach to charming boutique hotels and all-inclusive properties on stunning Eagle Beach, to fully-equipped condominiums and villas in the upscale Malmok area – there are countless ways to stay on One Happy Island and soak up sun and killer deals this holiday season. Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino Offer: Purchase a three-night stay and receive three additional days free. Rates start at \$379/night. Booking Window: Cyber Monday (Nov. 26) only. Travel Dates: April 22–Nov. 21, 2013. Redeem: Visit www.arubamarriott.com and enter promo code D52.

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Occidental Grand Aruba Offer: Save up to 38 percent this Cyber Monday with all-inclusive room rates starting at \$181 per person per night, based on double occupancy. Booking Window: Cyber Monday (Nov. 26) only. Travel Dates: Nov. 26 – Dec. 22, 2012. Redeem: Visit www.occidentalhotels.com/grand/Aruba.asp or call 1-800-858-2258.

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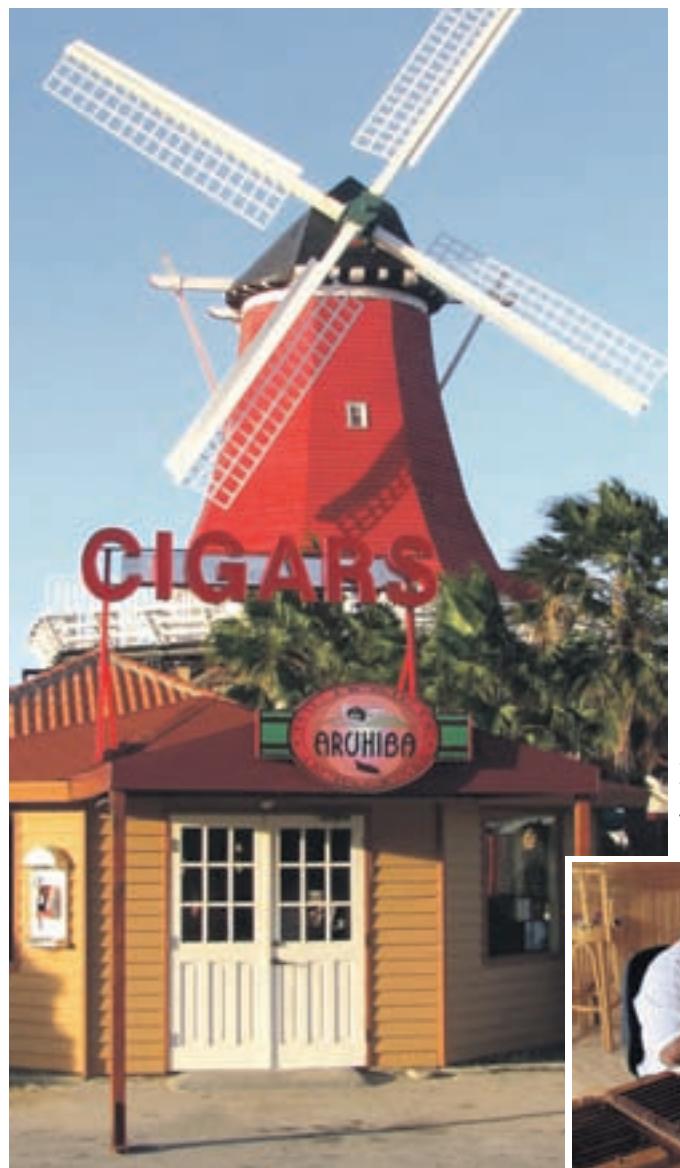
nightly rates starting at \$169 for select 2012 travel dates and \$299 for select 2013 travel dates. Booking Window: Nov. 26 – 30, 2012. Travel Dates: Nov. 21 – Dec. 19, 2012; Jan. 2 – March 31, 2013. Redeem: Visit www.westinaruba.com or call 877-782-0149 and mention CYBERLTO during the booking window.

Radisson Aruba Resort, Casino & Spa Offer: 2013 early booking bonus with rooms discounted up to 40 per-

cent with bonus features including \$25 spa credit, \$100 casino match-play, \$50 food and beverage credit for stays of 4-5 nights and \$100 food and beverage credit for stays exceeding six nights. Booking Window: Nov. 26 – Jan. 1, 2013. Travel Dates: Jan. 2 – Dec. 21, 2013. Redeem: Click [HERE](#) for 2013 early booking bonus details and booking. Super Saver Rate starting at \$179/night for select 2012 travel dates also offered [HERE](#). Tierra del Sol Resort, Spa & Country Club Offer: Enjoy five nights at the cost of four in a full-equipped condo, suite or villa with a private pool. Rates start at \$85/person per night. Booking Window: Nov. 26 – Dec. 18, 2012. Travel Dates: Nov. 26 – Dec. 18, 2012. Redeem: Email reservations@tierradelsol.com and ask for the Cyber Monday special. Learn more at www.tierradelsol.com. □

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ORANJESTAD- Benjamin Petrocchi, a true native Aruban started the newest export product of Aruba, locally produced hand rolled cigars called "Aruhiba". These cigars are produced and cultivated in Aruba. Petrocchi always had a interest in the cigar business and has also sold Premium Cuban Cigars, and now he is growing his own tobacco crops. After many attempts and trips to Santo Domingo

and Cuba, he started his own production and cultivation of Aruhiba

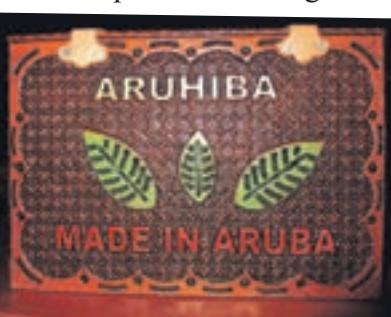
Cigars in Aruba. The whole process took him 10 years to perfect. Petrocchi dedication to the cigars is important for the moulding and process of making a

perfect cigar which takes a long time. Their handmade cigar box is specially designed with their "Aruhiba" logo. Petrocchi considers Aruhiba as a promotion for Aruba through its fine cigars. The company sells Aruhiba to the international markets as well. Visit their retail store

located in front of the Historic Dutch Windmill in front of the Westin Resort, with any purchase of \$20 and up you receive a free "Aruhiba" cigar or ask for their gift box of 5 cigars get 1 FREE for only \$37. They open from Monday to Saturday from 9 am till 6:30 pm and on Sundays from 9 am to 1 pm. Aruhiba cigars are now available at the gift stores in your resort

and at well-known cigar stores. For their complete selection and attractive by the box prices visit their retail store. Tours are also available at their Tobacco farm where their cigars are grown and rolled.

For a group or private tour, call 586 0347 - 593 6177 or send them an email at aruhibacigars@gmail.com



Andrea Carrion entertains family and friends at Amazonia!

Palm Beach – The excitement of the holiday season is in the air at Amazonia Churrascaria as groups big and small book their holiday gatherings at the Brazilian Steakhouse on Palm Beach where the authentic Brazilian concept of Rodizio Steakhouse, pairs an extensive salad bar presentation, with a parade of gauchos, slicing more than 15 cuts of grilled beef, chicken, lamb, pork & sausage, as well as grilled pineapple.

The year 2012 was remarkably good for the restaurant as staffers helped Amazonia Churrascaria earn both the Wine Spectator Award of Excellence for 2012 and Trip Advisor's Award of Excellence, for 2012.

Colleagues, family members and friends looking to celebrate the holidays



together can choose between a lunch or dinner package that will satisfy everyone, from kids to adults, and from the biggest meat lovers to strict vegetarians, says Sales & Marketing Coordinator Julie Heward-Geerman who invited the public to call and book as early as possible, by calling the restaurant or by email: Julie@amazonia-aruba.com □



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3rd WTF World Para-Taekwondo Championships in Aruba

Azerbaijan clinched six gold, six silver and three bronze medals to defend its overall title at the 3rd WTF World Para-Taekwondo Championships, which took place in Santa Cruz, Aruba on Nov. 22, 2012. Spain took two golds and one bronze for the sec-

ond place in the overall medal tally, followed by Iran with two gold medals, Canada with one gold and one bronze, and Ukraine with one gold. A total of 53 athletes from 14 countries competed at the 3rd World Para-Taekwondo Championships, which

took place at the Centro Deportivo gymnasium in Santa Cruz, Aruba. Twenty-one countries earlier sent their entry lists of athletes and officials to the Aruba Organizing Committee for the 3rd World Para-Taekwondo Championships. An opening ceremony



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pire to their dreams. We can see here today, through the bright eyes of these athletes, that taekwondo embodies every aspect of the spirit of Olympism. The dreams that taekwondo brings to so many is felt throughout the world." Dr. Choue concluded his speech by saying, "The London 2012 Olympic Games was the greatest competition of our history. Rio 2016 will be even greater, but I say to you athletes here in Aruba, your road to the Olympics, and hopefully soon the Paralympics, begins here today." "Faster, higher, stronger. Fairer, more dynamic, spreading hope and dreams to the world. This is taekwondo! You are taekwondo!" The opening ceremony featured a variety of Aruban cultural performances and a WTF taekwondo demonstration. □

SPORTS

Aruba TODAY



Mercedes Grand Prix driver Michael Schumacher, of Germany, drives waving a race flag during a test lap prior to the Formula One Brazilian Grand Prix at the Interlagos race track in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Sunday, Nov. 25, 2012.

Associated Press

Schumacher ends career with 'fun' final race

TALES AZZONI
AP Sports Writer

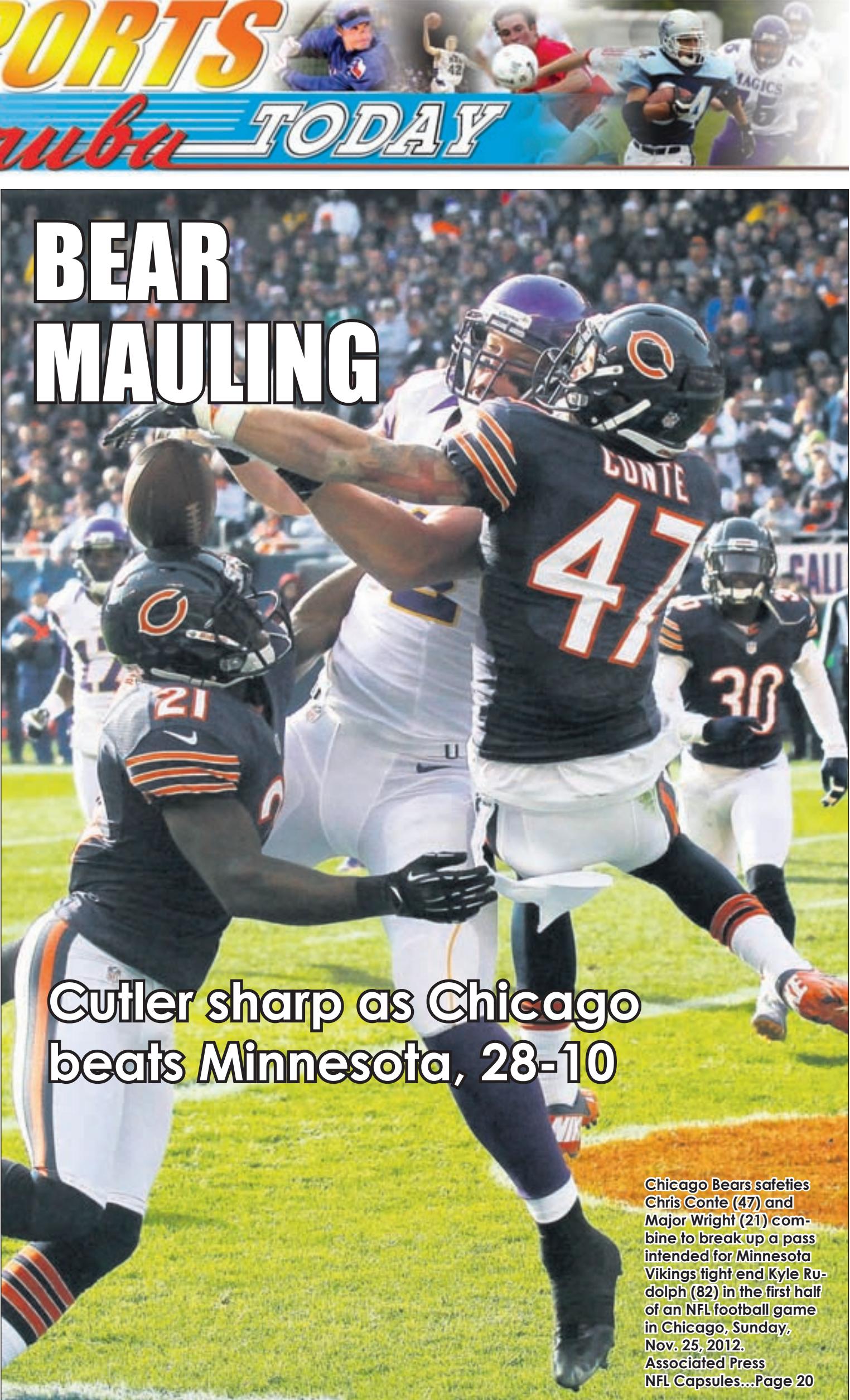
SAO PAULO (AP) — Michael Schumacher's final race was a bit like the last three years he spent in Formula One after coming out of his first retirement — solid but unspectacular.

That didn't stop the German seven-time champion from thoroughly enjoying what he called an "exciting" Brazilian Grand Prix on Sunday before walking away from a sport he dominated for many of his 19 seasons.

"Even under these difficult conditions, my final Formula One race was tremendous fun," he said. "I would once again like to thank the team and all my fans for their support over the past years. I've enjoyed the time we've spent together very much indeed."

Continued on page 18

BEAR MAULING



Cutler sharp as Chicago beats Minnesota, 28-10

Chicago Bears safeties Chris Conte (47) and Major Wright (21) combine to break up a pass intended for Minnesota Vikings tight end Kyle Rudolph (82) in the first half of an NFL football game in Chicago, Sunday, Nov. 25, 2012.

Associated Press
NFL Capsules...Page 20

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Mercedes Grand Prix driver Michael Schumacher, of Germany, flashes a thumbs up at the end of the Formula One Brazilian Grand Prix at the Interlagos race track in Sao Paulo, Sunday, Nov. 25, 2012. Seven-time world champion Schumacher is retiring after the 2012 season.

Associated Press

Schumacher

Continued from page 17

F1's most successful driver finished seventh at Interlagos after recovering from a punctured tire that left him a lap down early in the race, earning a final six points to cap off his career. "What an exciting and eventful grand prix," Schumacher said. "Strangely enough, my last ever Formula One race began with a puncture which pushed me down the running order. But it's always been my philosophy to never give up, there's always a chance, you just

have to keep going and seize it when it comes."

The stands at Interlagos were packed with banners and signs honoring and congratulating Schumacher.

The 43-year-old German is retiring for the second time, having quit in 2006 before coming back with Mercedes in 2010.

He struggled in the last three seasons, though, being constantly outpaced by teammate Nico Rosberg and managing only one podium finish, at the European GP in July. He finished 13th in the drivers' standings this season.

Minutes before Sunday's race, he lapped the track with a flag with the words "Thank You." He used the radio to thank the mechanics and engineers he has worked with as well as his fans watching on TV. After the race, members of the Mercedes team wore a shirt thanking him and saying goodbye.

"We thank Michael not only for his tremendous dedication and his racing achievements for our team, but also for those great personal qualities that he manifested at all times," said Norbert Haug, vice-president of Mercedes-Benz Motorsport. "The three seasons he spent with us will always serve as a model of team play at its best."

Schumacher lost sixth place on Sunday after being passed by Sebastian Vettel near the end of the race. Vettel went on to clinch his third straight F1 title, and Schumacher was the first to congratulate his fellow

countryman after the race. "I'm very proud of Sebastian and really thrilled for him," Schumacher said.

Vettel, who became the first driver to win three championships in a row since Schumacher did it in 2004, thanked the racing legend "for not defending too hard."

Schumacher is leaving F1 with numbers unmatched by any other driver. He retires with the most wins (91), pole positions (68), fastest laps (77) and most podium finishes (155).

"It's a strange sort of coincidence that I've ended my Formula One career now in P7, which was my first ever qualifying result at Spa-Francorchamps 308 races ago," Schumacher said. "It also occurs to me that I was driving with the No. 7 on my car today and that I have seven world championship trophies in my cabinet."

Vettel, F1's youngest three-time champion and the sport's newest big star, dismissed the idea of one day matching the accomplishments of his childhood idol.

"I don't think I'm commenting on that because it's nonsense," Vettel said. "I think that whatever he achieved in his career is unbelievable. People tend to forget but he was dominant like no other driver ever in Formula One during his time." □

Beauty On The Beach

Virginia Rasmijn

She is married to a local and is staying at her family in law. This is her third visit and planning to stay in Aruba for a very long time but now she is enjoying a very romantic vacation with her husband.

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Parker scores 32 as Spurs beat Raptors 111-106

IAN HARRISON
Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Tony Parker called it was a game that "could have gone either way." But with a perfect performance in the second overtime, Parker made sure his San Antonio Spurs came out on top.

Parker scored six of his 32 points in the second OT, Tim Duncan had 26 and the Spurs beat Toronto 111-106 Sunday, their fourth straight victory over the Raptors.

Duncan said no one was more vital to San Antonio's win than Parker, who made all three shots he took in the second overtime and topped 30 points for the second straight game.

"He's our closer and he has been that way for the last couple of years," Duncan said. "He steps up and makes big shots for us. That's what we ask him to do and he's delivered for us."

Manu Ginobili scored 15 points, Danny Green had 13 and Boris Diaw 11 as the Spurs won their third straight and improved their NBA-best road record to 7-1. "We take pride in winning on the road," Ginobili said. Parker made jump shots on consecutive possessions with less than 1 minute, 15 seconds to go in the second overtime as the Spurs held on. "We had to work hard for this one," Parker said. Spurs coach Gregg Popovich agreed, not that he was happy about it. "In a lot of ways, (Toronto) played better than we did," Popovich said. "They destroyed us on the boards. For most of the meat of the game they just threw it up there, missed it and they'd go get it again. That kept them in the ballgame.

We did a better job in the overtimes defensively and on the boards, and that got us over the hump." DeMar DeRozan led Toronto with 29 points, while rookie Jonas Valanciunas had 22. Kyle Lowry scored 20 points and Ed Davis had 15 points and 14 rebounds for the Raptors, who have lost their past three games by a combined seven points. Toronto's Andrea Bargnani had a disappointing game, scoring four points and making just two of 19 field goal attempts. "Today was definitely a very bad night," Bargnani said. "Maybe the worst." Raptors coach Dwane Casey dismissed suggestions that he should have benched Bargnani, the first overall pick in the 2006 draft. "I've got to go with Andrea," Casey said. "He's our guy." Valanciunas calmly made free throws to tie the score at 88 with 24 seconds left in regulation. San Antonio gave the ball to Parker, who let the clock run down to six seconds, but almost turned it over as he drove. Parker's 3-point effort fell short, giving Toronto one-tenth of a second to try for the winning basket, but Bargnani's no-look shot went wide, sending the game to overtime. San Antonio led 92-90 on Duncan's dunk with less than 30 seconds to go in the first overtime when a foul by Parker gave possession to the Raptors. But Parker stole Jose Calderon's inbounds pass and raced in for a layup, giving the Spurs an 94-90 lead with 24 seconds left. "I saw that Calderon was going to lob it and so I felt that with my speed I could sneak in there and get it," Parker said. □

Toronto Raptors' Kyle Lowry, left, defends San Antonio Spurs' Tony Parker (9) during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, Nov. 25, 2012, in Toronto.

Associated Press



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NFL Capsules

Falcons overcome mistakes to beat Buccaneers 24-23

The Associated Press

TAMPA, Florida (AP) —

Matt Ryan threw for 353 yards and overcame two big turnovers by leading another late touchdown drive to give the Atlanta Falcons a 24-23 victory over the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Sunday.

Ryan teamed with Julio Jones on an 80-yard TD in the third quarter, but the NFC South leaders found themselves trailing 23-17 after the Bucs marched for a touchdown, then forced a fumble by Ryan to set up a field goal that put the Falcons in catchup mode.

Michael Turner's 1-yard TD run put Atlanta ahead for good with 7:55 left. Connor Barth missed a 56-yard goal for Tampa Bay (6-5) in the closing minutes, and the Bucs' four-game winning streak ended when Josh Freeman's desperation pass fell incomplete in the end zone with no time remaining.

The win enabled the Falcons (10-1) to keep pace with Houston for the NFL's best record. Turner also scored a fourth-quarter TD that helped the Falcons overcome mistakes to beat Arizona 23-19 last week.

BRONCOS 17,**CHIEFS 9**

KANSAS CITY, Missouri (AP) — Peyton Manning threw for 285 yards and two touchdowns, and Denver rallied for its sixth straight win.

Manning hit tight end Jacob Tamme late in the first half and wide receiver Demaryius Thomas in the third quarter, and that was more than enough to overcome three field goals by the Chiefs' Ryan Succop as Kansas City lost its eighth straight game.

Knowshon Moreno added 85 yards rushing for the AFC West-leading Broncos



Atlanta Falcons wide receiver Julio Jones (11) is shoved out of bounds by Tampa Bay Buccaneers free safety Ahmad Black (43) during the second quarter of an NFL football game Sunday, Nov. 25, 2012, in Tampa, Fla. Jones was ruled out of bounds.

Associated Press

(8-3). Moreno got the start in place of Willis McGahee, who went on injured reserve this week with a knee injury.

Jamaal Charles ran for 107 yards for the Chiefs (1-10), who failed again to punch the ball into the end zone. They still haven't scored a touchdown since the first quarter against Pittsburgh on Nov. 12, a span of more than 11 quarters and 173 minutes of game time.

BEARS 28, VIKINGS 10

CHICAGO (AP) — Jay Cutler threw for 188 yards and a touchdown after missing a game because of a concussion as Chicago ended a two-game losing streak.

Tied with Green Bay for the NFC North lead and just a game ahead of Minnesota (6-5) coming in, the Bears (8-3) grabbed a 25-3 half-time lead thanks to Cutler's pinpoint passing. The defense held Adrian Peterson in check early on, although he finished with 108 yards rushing.

The win could prove costly.

The Bears lost wide receiver Devin Hester (concussion), running back Matt Forte (ankle), cornerback Charles Tillman (ankle) and both starting guards to injuries.

BENGALS 34, RAIDERS 10

CINCINNATI (AP) — Andy Dalton threw three touchdown passes and Cincinnati showed its former quarterback, Carson Palmer, that it has moved on without him.

BenJarvus Green-Ellis ran for 129 yards and a touchdown against the NFL's most generous defense. He had runs of 48 and 39 yards — the longest of his career — to set up scores.

Palmer had a tough time all-around in his return to Cincinnati, going 19 of 34 for 146 yards with four sacks and an interception.

With their third straight win, the Bengals (6-5) moved back into the playoff chase. Oakland (3-8) lost its fourth in a row.

A brawl in the fourth quarter resulted in Oakland's

Tommy Kelly and Lamarr Houston and Cincinnati's Andrew Whitworth getting ejected.

BROWNS 20, STEELERS 14

CLEVELAND (AP) — Chris Rainey's fumble with 2:25 left — Pittsburgh's seventh of eight turnovers — was recovered by Cleveland's Phil Taylor and the Browns handed their hated rivals a potentially devastating loss.

Charlie Batch, starting at quarterback for Pittsburgh because of injuries to Ben Roethlisberger and Byron Leftwich, was picked off three times and the Steelers (6-5) lost five fumbles, the last on the final play of the game to help the Browns (3-8) beat Pittsburgh for just the second time in 18 games.

Browns quarterback Brandon Weeden sustained a head injury in the final minutes. Backup Colt McCoy finished the win. Batch was 20 of 34 for 199 yards.

COLTS 20, BILLS 13

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) —

T.Y. Hilton scored on a 75-yard punt return and caught an 8-yard TD pass from Andrew Luck.

Hilton is the first player in franchise history to score by punt return and pass reception in the same game. Indy improved to 7-4.

Luck was 20 of 37 for 240 yards with a TD and an interception.

Buffalo (4-7) ended its red-zone drought with 11:30 left with a 1-yard TD pass from Ryan Fitzpatrick to Lee Smith to make it 20-13.

JAGUARS 24, TITANS 19

JACKSONVILLE, Florida (AP) — Chad Henne threw two touchdown passes, sparking the NFL's worst offense for the second consecutive week.

The Jaguars (2-9) snapped a seven-game losing streak and were competitive at home for the first time this season.

Henne, making his first start in more than 13 months, found Cecil Shorts III on a 59-yard touchdown play in the third quarter and hooked up with rookie Justin Blackmon for a 7-yard score in the fourth.

The Titans (4-7) cut the lead to 21-19 on Jake Locker's 6-yard pass to Kenny Britt with 4:52 remaining and had the ball with a chance to take the lead. But Russell Allen tipped Locker's pass over the middle, and Dwight Lowery — back on the field after a five-week absence — had his first interception of the season.

DOLPHINS 24, SEAHAWKS 21

MIAMI (AP) — Dan Carpenter kicked a 43-yard field goal on the final, and Miami scored 17 points in the last 8:08.

Rookie Ryan Tannehill drove Miami 65 yards in the final 92 seconds to set up the winning kick. □

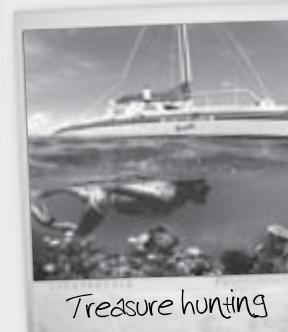


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McIlroy wins Dubai World Championship by 2 strokes

MICHAEL CASEY

AP Sports Writer

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) —

Rory McIlroy won the Dubai World Championship by two strokes on Sunday after finishing with five straight birdies to shoot a 6-under 66, ending a year in which he won the PGA Championship and the European and PGA tour money titles. The top-ranked Northern Irishman recovered from some early putting woes to total of 23-under 265 at the season-ending tournament to beat Justin Rose of England, who shot a course-record 62 that included an eagle and eight birdies. "I just wanted to finish the season the way I thought I deserved to finish the season," McIlroy said after his second European title this year and fifth overall. "You know, I played so well throughout the year and I didn't want to just let it tail off, sort of, timidly. I wanted to come here and finish in style." Second-ranked Luke Donald (71) was joint third with 2011 Masters champion Charl Schwartzel of South Africa (68) at 270. Compatriot Louis Oosthuizen (69), the 2010 British Open winner, was a further shot back in fifth place. The day was supposed to be a duel between McIlroy and Donald, who were joint leaders after the third round. It never happened.

The Englishman took an early two-shot lead when McIlroy bogeyed No. 1 and Donald birdied the following hole. But Donald three-putted No. 3 to end a run of 102 holes on the Earth Course without a bogey. Donald then had another bogey on No. 12 to fall three back and never challenged after that, missing the green on No. 17 to put an end to his title bid. "All runs come to an end," Donald said. "But again, I struggled to get any momentum today. I felt a little flat and unfortunately I couldn't get anything going. And you know, Justin put on quite a show in front of us and nudged Rory enough to get him going." Rose started the day joint seventh and just kept moving up the leaderboard.

"It was a lot of fun, absolutely," Rose said. "The front nine was just as good as the back nine and the back nine putts started going in which is a nice feeling. I knew I was playing my way into the tournament, more than into the tournament but into the lead." Rose pulled within one of McIlroy with a birdie on 13 and then moved ahead with an eagle on No. 14 after his approach shot rolled to within 10 feet. He sank the putt to lead for the first time in the tournament and doubled his advantage when McIlroy three-putted on No. 13. Rose had another birdie on 15 before his 60-foot eagle putt on 18 slowly rolled over a hump and came within inches of the cup — setting off a gasp from the gallery. □



Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland holds the trophy after he wins the final round of DP World Golf Championship in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Sunday Nov. 25, 2012.

Associated Press

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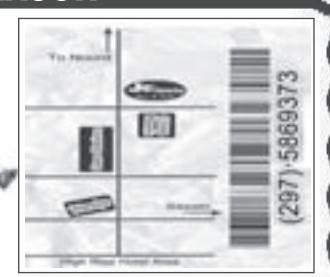
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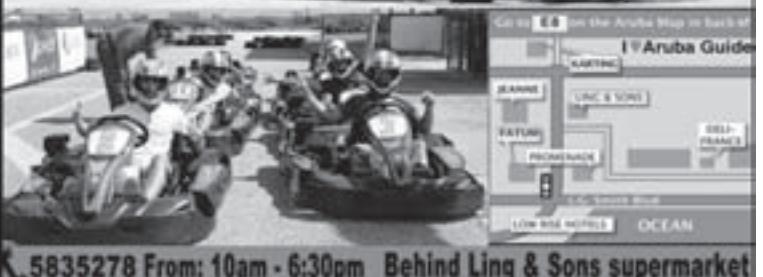
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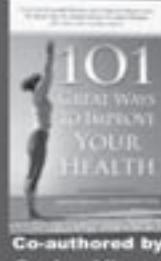


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Skin care coaches fill a niche for epidermal health

ALIX STRAUSS

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For the past 2 1/2 years, Marlena Hall, a public relations and marketing professional, has visited Nancy Reagan (not the former first lady, but an aesthetician with about 200 clients) almost weekly.

"I was skeptical at first," said Hall, 26, who lives in Boca Raton, Fla. "But after a session, I know things are going to be better. I've a plan, I'm getting solid advice and I'm setting goals with someone who wants to help me."

Reagan isn't a therapist in the clinical sense. But for many of her patients seeking skin care help, that's exactly what she is.

"I prefer skin care coach," said Reagan, who has been in the business for 20 years, speaking from her spa in Delray Beach, Fla. "The majority of my work deals with women and self-esteem. That involves their face and their feelings."

Reagan's hourlong coaching sessions cost \$50 to \$250 (the first consultation is free), and might involve creating

a strategy, setting goals, lifestyle reviewing, journal keeping, or the recommendation of topical products and treatments.

Getting professional advice on skin care outside the dermatologist's office is nothing new (just think of Clinique's famous "technicians," with their white lab coats), but lately the popular and expensive practice of life coaching has been making its way into the beauty industry.

Myskinprescription.com is a two-month-old website with more than 100 clients, each seeking customized skin care help. Renee Rouleau, who owns two skin care spas in Dallas, developed the site for out-of-state clients who needed one-on-one care, education and counseling. Call it "face coaching."

"People are desperate for a personalized connection," Rouleau said. "This is a competitive industry dominated by products and procedures, and consumers are left to sort things out by themselves. We learn about

your life and how skin care interacts in your world. Then we find solutions to your skin problems."

For Rouleau, coaching is serious business. Clients are asked to do homework, watch educational vid-

Thirty minutes of Skyping with Rouleau costs \$250, and includes \$100 worth of her own skin care products. She looks at clients' diets, edits the list of products in their medicine cabinet and discusses the right way



Renee Rouleau, who owns two skin care spas, uses an iPad to give advice to a client who lives in Maine, at one of her spas in Dallas. Rouleau developed a website for out-of-state clients who needed one-on-one care, education and counseling.

(Brandon Thibodeaux/The New York Times)

eos, read newsletters and download articles on their specific needs. She even demands that some sign a promise they will not pick at their skin.

to wear sunscreen (Rouleau believes 90 percent of people apply it incorrectly). They are then placed into one of nine groups, such as dry/tired/aging (No. 7),

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and a given a daily treatment plan, followed up with regularly scheduled emails containing personalized skin tips and tricks.

Skin care coaches suggest that although many dermatologists and plastic surgeons have their own cosmetics lines, they may be too busy to talk patients through the nuts and bolts of maintenance.

"Dermatologists focus on immediate care and treating skin problems, usually by prescribing medications or professional treatments like lasers and fillers," Rouleau said. "They don't focus on the day-to-day home care required for long-term healthy skin."

Reagan added that skin care coaches consider the whole body, while most aestheticians are focused on topical fixes like extractions or masks and do not consider nutrition or allergies. Karin Roth, 35, an engineer in Cambridge, Mass., said that she spent years seeing dermatologists. She had her first Skype session with Rouleau last month and was pleased with the experience.

"I wanted what I couldn't get from my dermatologist," she said; that is, to be told when to exfoliate, when to do a peel, when she should be moisturizing and how certain products will affect her skin.

"No dermatologist would sit through that," Roth said. "They're mostly men interested in medical issues, not in making a woman feel pretty. I needed a different kind of relationship."

Teresa Munoz, 36, an executive assistant for a health care company in Chicago, agreed: "In terms of skin care, Skyping with Renee and what I learned from her was a lifestyle change for me." □

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Scientists see promise in deep-learning programs

By JOHN MARKOFF

Using an artificial intelligence technique inspired by theories about how the brain recognizes patterns, technology companies are reporting startling gains in fields as diverse as computer vision, speech recognition and the identification of promising new molecules for designing drugs. A student team led by the computer scientist Geoffrey E. Hinton used deep-learning technology to design software.

The advances have led to widespread enthusiasm among researchers who design software to perform human activities like seeing, listening and thinking. They offer the promise of machines that converse with humans and perform tasks like driving cars and working in factories, raising the specter of automated robots that could replace human workers.

The technology, called deep learning, has already been put to use in services like Apple's Siri virtual personal assistant, which is based on Nuance Communications' speech recognition service, and in Google's Street View, which uses machine vision to identify specific addresses.

But what is new in recent months is the growing speed and accuracy of deep-learning programs, often called artificial neural networks or just "neural nets" for their resemblance to the neural connections in the brain.

"There has been a number of stunning new results with deep-learning methods," said Yann LeCun, a computer scientist at New York University who did pioneering research in handwriting recognition at Bell Labora-



A voice recognition program translated a speech given by Richard F. Rashid, Microsoft's top scientist, into Mandarin Chinese.

Hao Zhang

tories. "The kind of jump we are seeing in the accuracy of these systems is very rare indeed."

Artificial intelligence researchers are acutely aware of the dangers of being overly optimistic. Their field has long been plagued by outbursts of misplaced enthusiasm followed by equally striking declines.

In the 1960s, some computer scientists believed that a workable artificial intelligence system was just 10 years away. In the 1980s, a wave of commercial startups collapsed, leading to what some people called the "A.I. winter."

But recent achievements have impressed a wide spectrum of computer experts. In October, for example, a team of graduate students studying with the University of Toronto computer scientist Geoffrey E. Hinton won the top prize in a contest sponsored by Merck to design software to help find molecules that might lead to new drugs. From a data set describing the chemical structure

of 15 different molecules, they used deep-learning software to determine which molecule was most likely to be an effective drug agent.

The achievement was particularly impressive because the team decided to enter the contest at the last minute and designed its software with no specific knowledge about how the molecules bind to their targets.

The students were also working with a relatively small set of data; neural nets typically perform well only with very large ones.

"This is a really breathtaking result because it is the first time that deep learning won, and more significantly it won on a data set that it wouldn't have been expected to win at," said Anthony Goldbloom, chief executive and founder of Kaggle, a company that organizes data science competitions, including the Merck contest.

Advances in pattern recognition hold implications not just for drug development but for an array of appli-

cations like images or sounds. These techniques, aided by the growing speed and power of modern computers, have led to rapid improvements in speech recognition, drug discovery and computer vision.

Deep-learning systems have recently outperformed humans in certain limited recognition tests.

Last year, for example, a program created by scientists at the Swiss A. I. Lab at the University of Lugano won a pattern recognition contest by outperforming both competing software systems and a human expert in identifying images in a database of German traffic signs.

The winning program accurately identified 99.46 percent of the images in a set of 50,000; the top score in a group of 32 human participants was 99.22 percent, and the average for the humans was 98.84 percent.

This summer, Jeff Dean, a Google technical fellow, and Andrew Y. Ng, a Stanford computer scientist, programmed a cluster of 16,000 computers to train itself to automatically recognize images in a library of 14 million pictures of 20,000 different objects. Although the accuracy rate was low — 15.8 percent — the system did 70 percent better than the most advanced previous one.

Deep learning was given a particularly audacious display at a conference last month in Tianjin, China, when Richard F. Rashid, Microsoft's top scientist, gave a lecture in a cavernous auditorium while a computer program recognized his words and simultaneously displayed them in English on a large screen above his head. □

/The New York Times



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Cyber Monday expects busiest online sales day

MAE ANDERSON

AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Black Friday is a distant memory. Small Business Saturday is long gone. Now, it's Cyber Monday's turn.

Cyber Monday, coined in 2005 by a shopping trade group that noticed a spike in online sales on the Monday after the Thanksgiving holiday when people returned to their work computers, is the next in a line of days that stores are counting on to jump-start the holiday shopping season.

This year's Cyber Monday is expected to be the biggest online shopping day of the year for the third year in a row: According to research firm comScore, Americans are expected to spend \$1.5 billion, up from \$1.25 billion last year on Cyber Monday, as retailers ramp up deals to get shoppers to click on their websites.

Amazon.com, which is starting its Cyber Monday deals at midnight on Monday, is offering as much as 60 percent off a Panasonic VIERA 55-inch (140-centimeter) TV that's usually

priced higher than \$1,000. Sears is offering \$430 off a Maytag washer and dryer, each on sale for \$399. And Kmart is offering 75 percent off diamond earrings and

Sexton, who plans to spend up to \$4,000 this season, already shopped online on the day after Thanksgiving known as Black Friday and found a laptop from Best

manager at a utility company.

Sexton also said it's easier to return an online purchase to a physical store than it had been in previous years. "That helps with gifts," he said.

How well retailers do on Cyber Monday will offer insight into Americans' evolving shopping habits. With the growth in high speed Internet access and the wide and increasing use of smartphones and tablet computers, people are relying less on their work computers to shop than they did when Shop.org, the digital division of trade group The National Retail Federation, coined the term "Cyber Monday."

As a result, the period between the Thanksgiving holiday on Thursday and Cyber Monday has become busy for online shopping as well. Indeed, IBM Benchmark, which tracks online sales, said on Thanksgiving, a day that historically had not been big for online shopping, online sales this year rose

17.4 percent over 2011. Of that, mobile shopping, or shopping on smartphones and tablets, rose 18.3 percent. Meanwhile, online sales on Black Friday were up 20.7 percent.

For the overall holiday season, comScore predicts online sales will be up 17 percent to \$43.4 billion. And the research firm expects online sales to surpass 10 percent of total retail spending this holiday season. The National Retail Federation estimates that overall retail sales in November and December will be up 4.1 percent this year to \$586.1 billion

"People years ago didn't have the kind of connectivity to shop online at their homes. So when they went back to work after Thanksgiving they'd shop on the Monday after," said Vicki Cantrell, executive director of Shop.org. "Now they don't need the work computer to be able to do that."

But as other days become popular for online shopping, Cyber Monday may lose some of its cache. □



This year's Cyber Monday is expected to be the biggest online shopping day of the year for the third year in a row. Americans are expected to spend \$1.5 billion, up from \$1.25 billion last year on Cyber Monday.

(Handout Photo)

\$60 off a 12-in-1 multigame table on sale for \$89.99. Retailers are hoping the deals will appeal to shoppers like Matt Sexton, 39, who for the first time plans to complete all his holiday shopping online this year on his iPad tablet computer.

Buy for \$399, a \$200 savings, among other deals. "The descriptions and reviews are so much better online so you can compare and price shop and for the most part get free shipping," said Sexton, who lives in Queens, New York, and is a

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Thanksgiving doorbusters quell Black Friday's bite

LINDA A. JOHNSON
AP Business Writer

Thanksgiving shopping on Thursday took a noticeable bite out of Black Friday's start to the holiday season, as the latest survey found retail sales in stores fell slightly from last year.

Saturday's report from retail technology company ShopperTrak estimated that consumers spent \$11.2 billion at stores across the U.S. That is down 1.8 percent from last year's total. This year's Friday results appear to have been tempered by hundreds of thousands of shoppers hitting sales Thursday evening while still full of their Thanksgiving dinner. Retailers including Sears, Target and Wal-Mart got their deals rolling as early as 8 p.m. on Thursday.

Online shopping also may have cut into the take at brick-and-mortar stores: IBM said online sales rose 17.4 percent on Thanksgiving and 20.7 percent on Black Friday, compared with 2011.

Yet ShopperTrak said retail foot traffic increased 3.5 percent, to more than 307.67 million store visits, indicating at least some shoppers were browsing but not spending freely.

"Black Friday continues to be an important day in retail," said ShopperTrak founder Bill Martin. "This year, though, more retailers than last year began their doorbuster deals on Thursday, Thanksgiving it-

pared with last year. Traffic rose the least, 7.6 percent, in the Northeast, parts of which are still recovering from Superstorm Sandy. ShopperTrak, which counts foot traffic and its own proprietary sales numbers from



Black Friday shoppers pour into the Valley River Center mall for the Midnight Madness sale Friday, Nov. 23, 2012 in Eugene, Ore. For decades, stores have opened their doors in wee hours of the morning on the day after Thanksgiving known as Black Friday. But this year, that changed when major chains from Target to Toys R Us opened on Thanksgiving itself, turning the traditional busiest shopping day of the year into a two-day affair.

(AP Photo/Brian Davies)

self. So while foot traffic did increase on Friday, those Thursday deals attracted some of the spending that's usually meant for Friday."

The company estimated that shopper foot traffic rose the most in the Midwest, up 12.9 percent com-

25,000 retail outlets across the U.S., had forecast Black Friday sales would grow 3.8 percent this year, to \$11.4 billion.

While consumer confidence has been improving, many people are still worried about the slow

economic recovery, high unemployment and whether a gridlocked Congress can avert tax increases and government spending cuts — the so-called "fiscal cliff" — set to occur automatically in January.

And some would-be shoppers said they weren't impressed with the discounts, or that there wasn't enough inventory of the big door-busters.

"As far as deals, they weren't there," said Tammy Stempel, 48, of Gladstone, Oregon. "But businesses have to be successful, too. I'm hoping they extend the deals through December." She was waiting in line outside an Ikea in Portland on

Saturday to buy pots and pans for her 18-year old daughter — as a hint that it was time to move out. Stempel and her husband went shopping at two Targets, Michaels and other stores Friday, but failed to find any amazing deals, even on a flat-screen TV they wanted for themselves. Target, Best Buy and other stores near the Ikea seemed to have few customers, and traffic at the nearby Lloyd Center Mall also was light, even for a normal weekend. Many shoppers around the country were armed with iPads and smart phones, to check prices as well as buy. □

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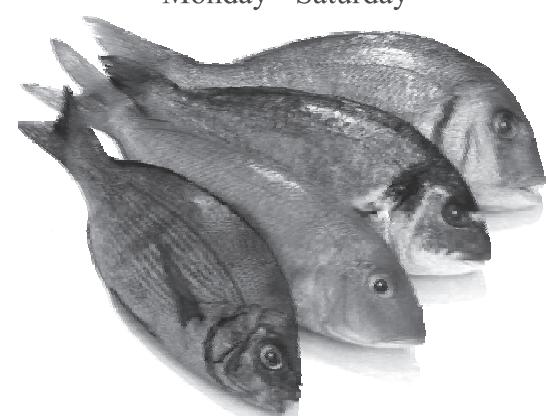
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Dubai plans new tourism-retail hub

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) -- Dubai says it's getting back in the business of biggest.

After years of downsized ambitions because of a debt crisis, Dubai has unveiled plans for a new tourism-retail hub that will include a shopping complex that would outclass

the Dubai Mall, billed as the world's biggest.

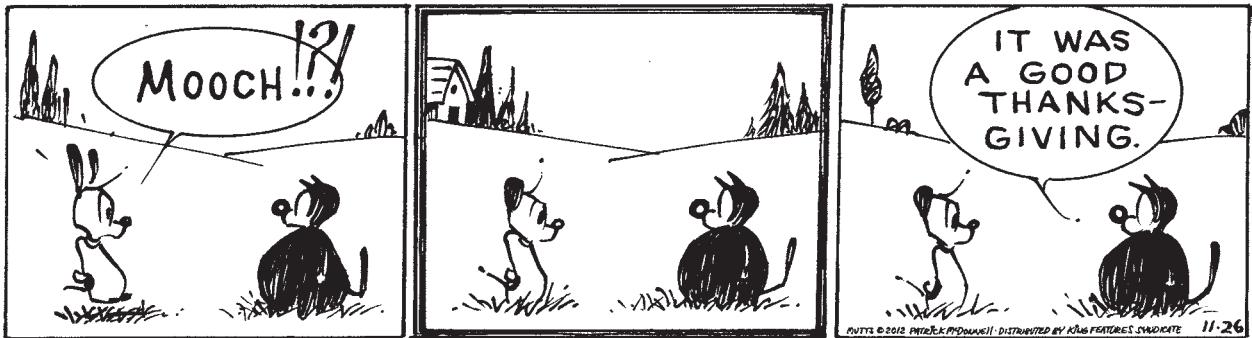
State news agency WAM says the planned development on the city's desert outskirts will include luxury hotels and a major theme park, a goal derailed by Dubai's fiscal meltdown in 2009.

No timetable was announced Sunday for the

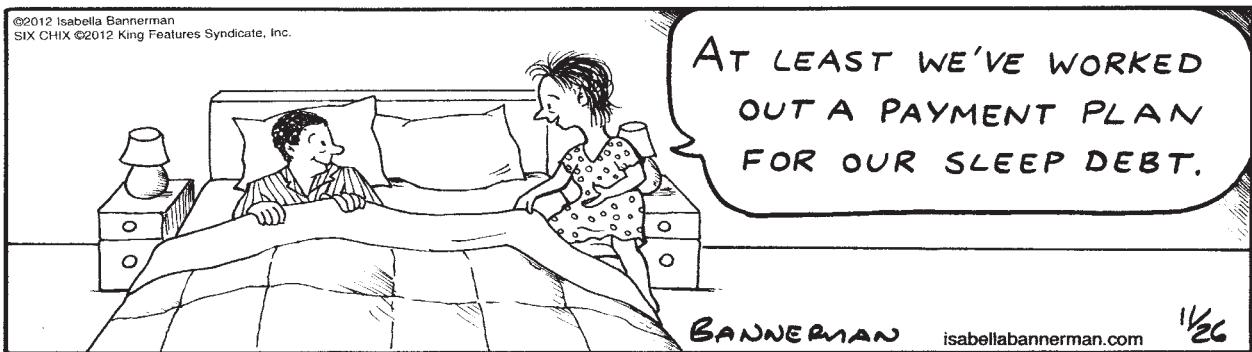
Mohammed Bin Rashid City.

But it allows Dubai ruler Sheik Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum to put his personal moniker on a mega-project after the country's president, Sheik Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, took the honor for the record-tall Burj Khalifa skyscraper in Dubai. □

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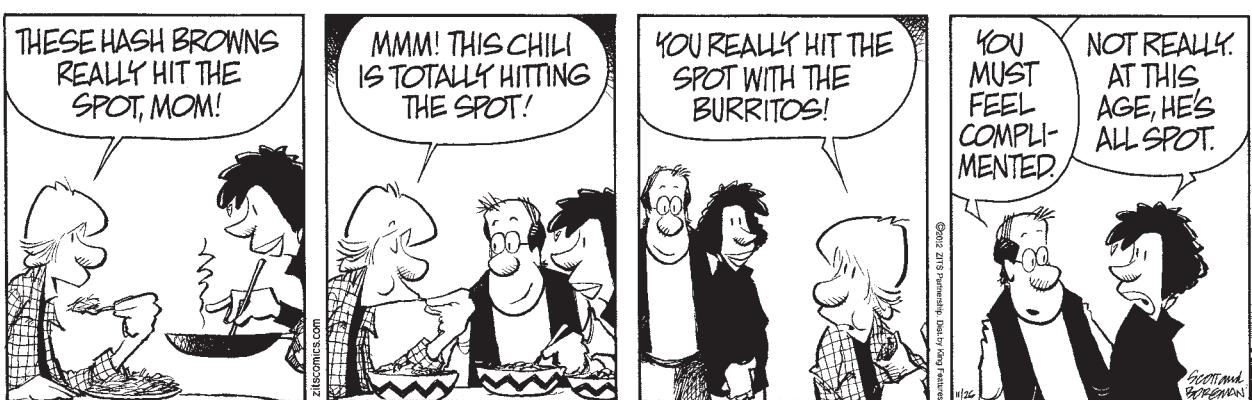
Mother Goose & Grimm



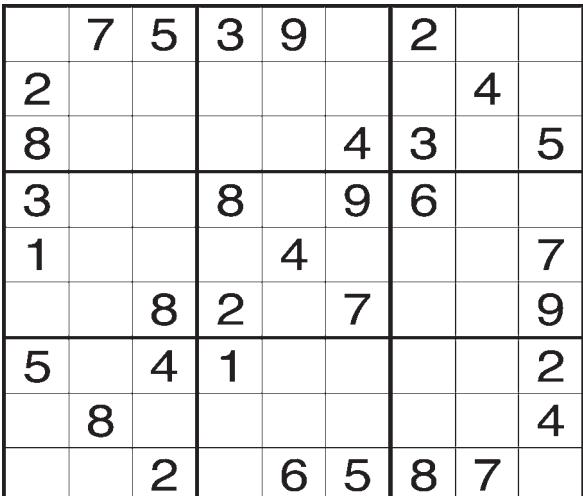
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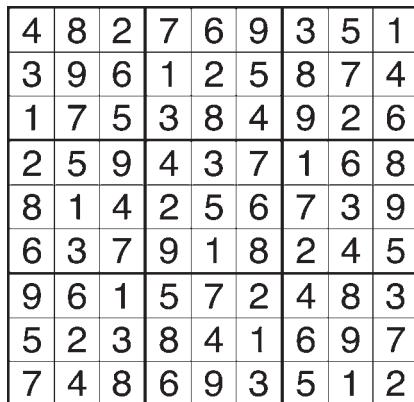
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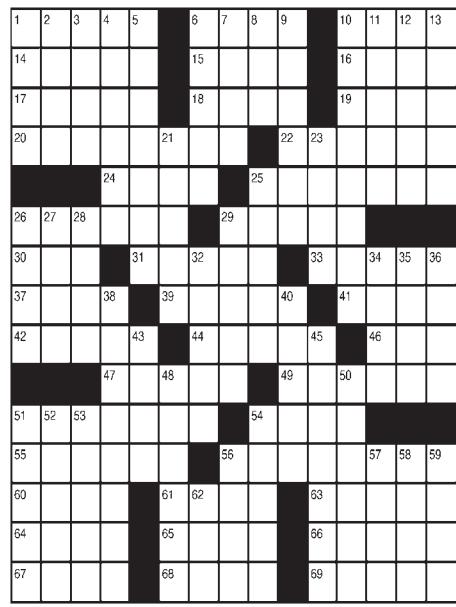
Difficulty Level ★

11/26

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.



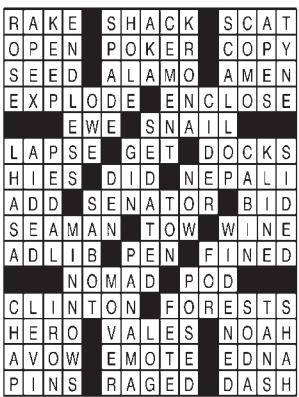
Saturday's puzzle answer



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

11/2

Saturday's Puzzle Solved



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Saturday's Puzzle Solved									
33 Bumpkins	3 Cordial	R	A	K	E	S	H	A	C
41 Finished	4 Adhere; cling	O	P	E	N	P	O	K	E
42 Used up	5 Melville's	S	E	E	D	A	L	A	M
44 Jeans fabric	namesakes	E	X	P	L	O	D	E	S
46 Armed conflict	6 Reject	E	W	E	S	N	A	I	L
47 Animal with a	7 Tin receptacles	L	A	P	S	E	G	O	D
piglike snout	8 Ring king, once	H	I	E	S	D	I	D	K
49 Find	9 Restrain with a	A	D	D	S	E	N	E	P
51 King Arthur's	10 Eased up	S	E	A	N	A	T	O	W
castle	11 Babble	E	A	D	L	I	P	E	N
54 Dance at a Bar	12 VP Spiro _	N	O	M	A	O	M	A	D
Mitzvah	13 Rod	C	L	I	T	O	R	E	S
55 Worships	attachments	H	E	R	O	V	A	L	E
56 Chaos	21 Sea duck with	A	V	O	W	E	M	O	A
60 Slangy refusal	fine soft down	P	I	N	S	A	G	E	D
61 Heroic tale	23 Cooking	I	N	O	M	A	G	E	H
63 Statement of	chamber	T	O	W	E	R	E	S	T
religious belief	25 "He is _!",	F	O	R	E	S	T	S	
64 Lincoln and	Easter phrase	36	In this place	52	Sun-dried brick	11/26/12			
Fortas	26 Goals	38	Investor's profit	53	Suks				
65 Chess piece	27 Swat	40	Storage towers	54	Hillbillies				
66 _ line; Cuban	28 Helpful hint	43	Story	56	Designer				
dance	29 Dark yellowish-	45	Rabat's nation	57	Christian _				
67 In case	orange	48	Puzzling	58	Fender blemish				
68 Gentlemen	32 Review of the	50	questions	59	Border				
69 Furry swimmer	financial books	51	Orange veggie	59	Laugh loudly				
DOWN	34 Dubuque, _	52	Suez or Erie	62	Luau dish				
1 Cots and cribs	35 Small fly	53		54					
2 Way out		55		56					

ODDS & ENDS

Crash ejects 14 tons of Christmas trees

VIENNA (AP) — An early seasonal delivery went badly wrong in Austria when a truck was involved in a crash and dumped 14 tons of Christmas trees in a resident's garden. Police in Vorarlberg state,

at Austria's western tip, say the accident happened Friday night as a truck with a trailer loaded with trees drove through the town of Hohenems. The trailer hit a wall, tipped over and landed in the

garden of a house. A police statement Saturday said that the fire service dispatched 30 people to recover the hundreds of fir trees. A passenger in the truck was injured and taken to a local hospital. □

BBQ settles over 'carrass removal' listing

HELENA, Montana (AP) — A phone book company has settled a lawsuit filed by a Montana barbecue restaurant that was listed in a section of the yellow pages for "Animal Carrass Removal." The owner of Bar 3 Bar-B-Q sued Dex Media Inc. after the listing appeared

in the 2009 phone book and was reprinted in other directories in 2010 and last year. It gained notoriety after it was featured as a joke on Jay Leno's show in 2011. Hunter Lacey's lawsuit claimed a Dex salesman deliberately published the free listing under the sec-

tion after he refused to buy an advertisement in the book. The terms of the Nov. 16 deal between Dex and the restaurant's parent company were not disclosed. A tentative agreement proposed in September said it would include a payment to Lacey. □

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‘Twilight,’ Bond, ‘Lincoln’ lead record weekend

DAVID GERMAIN

AP Movie Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Bella Swan, James Bond and Abe Lincoln have combined to lift Hollywood to record Thanksgiving holiday revenue at the box office.

Kristen Stewart's finale as Bella in "The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn — Part 2" was No. 1 again with \$64 million during the five-day holiday stretch that began Wednesday, according to studio estimates Sunday.

Daniel Craig's Bond adventure "Skyfall" came in at No. 2 with \$51 million, while Daniel Day-Lewis and Steven Spielberg's Civil War saga "Lincoln" finished third with \$34.1 million.

According to box-office tracker Hollywood.com, the three films paced Hollywood to an all-time Thanksgiving week best of about \$290 million from Wednesday to Sunday.

That tops the previous record of \$273 million over Thanksgiving in 2009, when "The Twilight Saga: New Moon" led the weekend. This Thanksgiving also was a huge 25 percent jump from



This film image released by Summit Entertainment shows Kristen Stewart, left, and Robert Pattinson in a scene from "The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2."

Associated Press

a year ago, when domestic revenues were a weak \$232 million as some big holiday releases fizzled.

With a strong December lineup ahead, Hollywood has resumed its record revenue pace for the year after a brief box-office lull in late summer and early fall. Domestic revenues for 2012 are at \$9.75 billion, putting Hollywood potentially on track for its first \$11 billion year, which would beat the

2009 record of \$10.6 billion, said Hollywood.com analyst Paul Dergarabedian.

"We're barreling toward a record-breaking box-office year," Dergarabedian said. "It's built on the back of just a lot of really strong movies that have come out over the past few weekends. It bodes very well for the rest of the holidays."

The "Twilight" finale, "Skyfall" and "Lincoln" finished in the same top-three rank-

ings for the second-straight weekend as new releases were unable to dislodge the holdovers.

Released by Lionsgate's Summit Entertainment banner, "Breaking Dawn — Part 2," pulled in

\$43.1 million from Friday to Sunday, raising its domestic total to \$227 million. The movie added \$97.4 million overseas to bring its international total to \$350.8 million and its worldwide take to \$577.8 million.

Sony's "Skyfall" also topped \$200 million domestically, ringing up \$36 million for the three-day weekend to put its U.S. total at \$221.7 million. With \$41.3 million more overseas, "Skyfall" raised its international revenues to \$568.4 million and its worldwide sales to \$790.1 million. "Lincoln," a DreamWorks film distributed by Disney, took in \$25 million over the weekend to lift its domestic revenue to \$62.2 million.

Leading the newcomers was Paramount and DreamWorks Animation's animated tale "Rise of the Guardians" at No. 4 with \$24 million for the weekend and \$32.6 million since opening Wednesday. □

PSY's 'Gangnam Style' most watched YouTube video



South Korean rapper PSY, who sings the popular "Gangnam Style," performs during his concert in front of Seoul City Hall in Seoul, South Korea, in this, Oct. 4, 2012 file photo.

Associated Press

Rolling Stones mark 50th year with London show

LONDON (AP) — The Rolling Stones are marking their 50th anniversary with a concert in London.

The band says R&B singer Mary J. Blige and rock guitarist Jeff Beck will be joining them on stage Sunday at the O2 Arena. Most of the tickets for the gig had sold out within minutes.

Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Charlie Watts and Ronnie Wood will also be joined by former Stones members Bill Wyman and Mick Taylor, who will perform again with the band for the first time in more than 20 years.

The Stones are playing again in London on Thursday before going to the U.S. for a show in New York on Dec. 8 and in Newark, New Jersey, on Dec. 13 and 15. □



Mick Jagger, front centre, Ronnie Wood, left, with Keith Richards and Charlie Watts, right, of The Rolling Stones perform at the O2 arena in east London, Sunday, Nov. 25, 2012. The band are playing four gigs to celebrate their 50th anniversary, including two shows at London's O2 and two more in New York.

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)

— South Korean rapper PSY's "Gangnam Style" has become YouTube's most viewed video of all time.

YouTube says in a posting on its Trends blog that "Gangnam Style" had been viewed 805 million times as of Saturday afternoon, surpassing Justin Bieber's "Baby," which has had 803 million views.

The blog says the "velocity of popularity for PSY's outlandish video is unprecedented."

PSY's video featuring his horse-riding dance was posted on YouTube in July, while "Baby" was uploaded in February 2010.

PSY's video has become a global sensation, with many people around the world mimicking his "Gangnam Style" dance. In their October meeting, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, a South Korean, joked that he had to relinquish his title as "the most famous Korean," and tried a few of PSY's dance moves. □

Singer Bjork's vocal cord surgery successful

LONDON (AP) — Icelandic singer Bjork says she has had successful surgery to remove a vocal cord polyp.

The eccentric 47-year-old singer says on her official website that she had been trying to tackle the problem with exercises and diets since doctors first discovered the polyp, a benign growth on either one or both of the vocal cords, several years ago. Bjork

said that she decided to undergo laser surgery and it has worked, though she had to stay quiet for three weeks. She wrote: "Surgery rocks! ... It's been very satisfying to sing all them clear notes again." The singer apologized for cancelling various shows earlier this year, and that she looked forward to singing for her fans next year. Last year Adele had minor surgery to remove a benign polyp. □

Grammy-winning bassist injured in Swiss bus crash



This is a Wednesday, May 23, 2012 file photo of Grammy award-winning jazz bassist Marcus Miller performs in concert at Papp Laszlo Sports Arena in Budapest, Hungary, Wednesday, May 23, 2012.

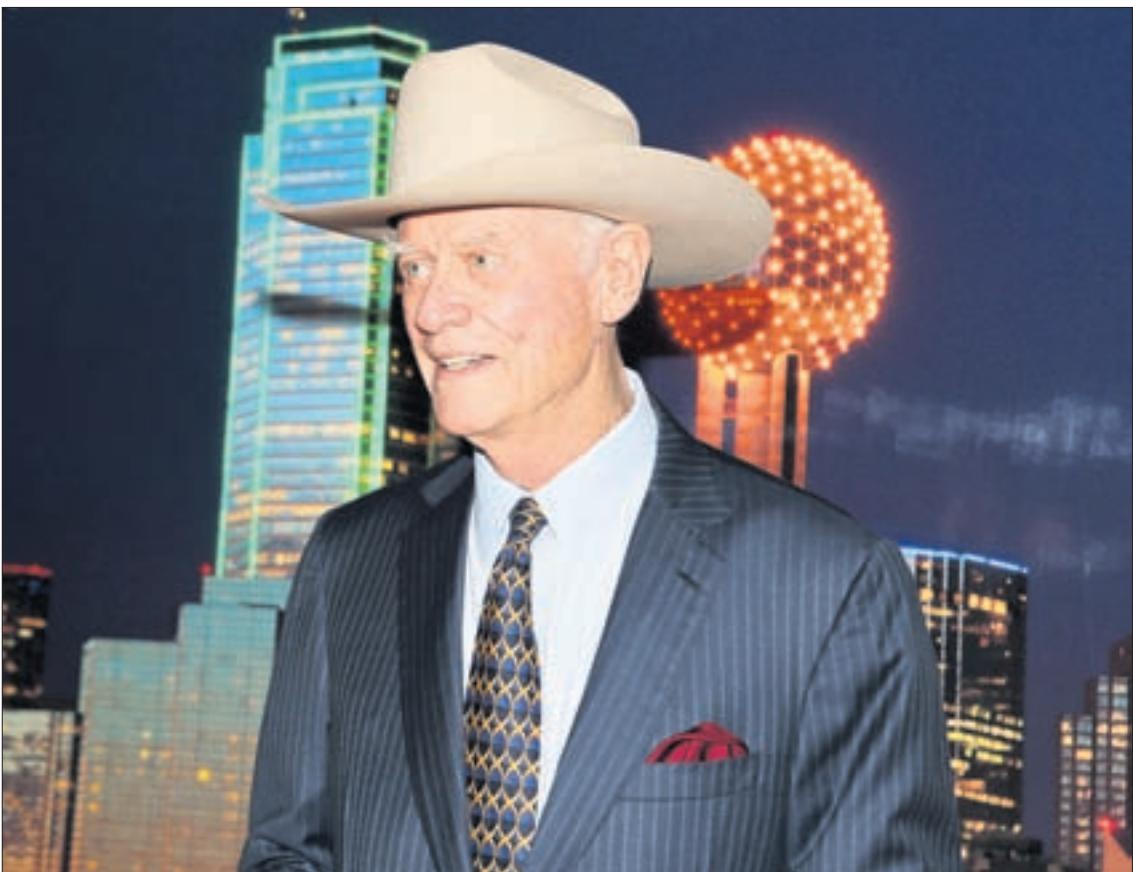
GENEVA (AP) — Grammy-winning jazz bassist Marcus Miller and several members of his band were injured when their bus overturned Sunday on a busy highway in Switzerland, killing the driver, police said.

The German-registered private bus tipped over as it drove into a bend on the A2 highway in central Switzerland and came to a rest on its side, police in the canton (state) of Uri said. The bus was carrying 13 people — two drivers and 11 members of the Marcus Miller Band, including Miller. Over his career, the bassist has worked with jazz greats such as Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie and Wayne Shorter, according to his website. He won two Grammys, his first coming in 1991 for Best Rhythm & Blues Song ("Power of Love") along with Luther Vandross and Teddy Vann, and the sec-

ond came in 2001 for Best Contemporary Jazz Album ("M2"). The band was on its way from Monte Carlo to the Dutch town of Hengelo, the next stop on the American band's tour, where it was due to perform Monday. The driver who was at the wheel at the time of the accident sustained fatal injuries. Police spokesman Karl Egli said the 12 passengers were injured and taken to hospitals, but none had life-threatening injuries. Miller was discharged from the hospital later Sunday, as were fellow band members Alex Han and Kris Bowers, but some other band and crew members were being kept in hospitals overnight, according to a post on Miller's official Facebook page. The cause of the accident was not immediately clear. Police believe no other vehicles were involved. □

Associated Press

Larry Hagman as J.R.: A TV villain for all ages



American actor, director and producer, Larry Hagman, best known for his role as "J.R. Ewing" from the TV series Dallas poses for a photo in front of a backdrop with an image of downtown Dallas, during a reception at the University of Texas at Tyler, following his presentation of "Confessions" on Nov. 10, 2012.

Associated Press

FRAZIER MOORE

AP Television

NEW YORK (AP) — One reason "Dallas" became a cultural phenomenon like none other is that Larry Hagman never took its magnitude for granted. During an interview last June, he spoke of returning to Dallas and the real-life Southfork Ranch some months earlier to resume his role of J.R. Ewing for the TNT cable network's revival of the series. There at Southfork, now a major tourist attraction, he came upon a wall-size family tree diagramming the entanglement of "Dallas" characters.

"I looked at it and said 'I didn't know I was related to HER!'" Hagman marveled. "And I didn't know THAT!"

In its own way, the original "Dallas" — which aired on CBS from 1978 to 1991 — was unfathomably bigger than anything on TV before or since, while J.R. Ewing remains unrivaled not just as a video villain but as a towering mythical figure.

All this is largely thanks to Hagman and his epic por-

trayal of J.R., a Texas oilman and patriarch who, in Hagman's hands, was in equal measures loathsome and lovable.

Hagman, who died Friday at 81, certainly had nothing more to prove a quarter-century ago when "Dallas" ended after 14 seasons.

But in the series revival, whose first season aired this summer, J.R. was even

more evil and deliciously conniving than ever. Though visibly frail, Hagman knew how to leverage J.R.'s vulnerabilities as a new form of strength to wield against his rivals. Hagman knew how to double-down on J.R. as a force the audience could hiss and cheer with equal delight.

Of course, in his long career, Hagman did more than star in "Dallas" and tackle more roles than J.R. Ewing. Had "Dallas" never come along with its operatic sprawl of power, corruption and family feuds, Hagman would likely be remembered for an earlier series,

"I Dream of Jeannie," the 1960s comedy series about an astronaut and the genie who loved him. □

Even so, during Hagman's five seasons co-starring with Barbara Eden as the sexy genie-in-a-bottle, he was inevitably upstaged.

That would never be a problem on "Dallas," especially after the final hour of the series' second season, when J.R. was gunned down by an unknown assailant and left for dead on his office floor.

All that summer and late into the fall, the nation was seized and teased by the mystery of Who Shot J.R.? Nearly every fellow character had sufficient motive to want J.R. killed, and which of them had done the deed was a question everyone was asking. Finally, the answer was delivered on the episode that aired 32 years ago almost to the day — on Nov. 21, 1980 — when the shooter was revealed to be J.R.'s scheming sister-in-law and mistress, Kristin.

And oh, by the way, J.R. survived. As J.R., Hagman could marshal piercing glances with his hawk-like eyes, and chill any onlooker with his wicked grin. □

Morsi's Moment



THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN
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The Israeli-Hamas miniwar last week was the first test of the post-Arab awakening order in the Middle East. Hamas, by getting embroiled in a missile duel with Israel and then calling on Arab countries for support, particularly Egypt, was testing Cairo as much as Israel. And the question Hamas was posing to Egyptians was simple: Did Egypt have a democratic revolution last year to become more like Iran or more like China? In other words, is Egypt ready to sacrifice the Camp David peace, U.S. aid and economic development to support Hamas's radical, pro-Iranian agenda, or not? The answer from Cairo was no. President Mohammed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood's party did not want to get dragged into a total breach with Israel on behalf of Hamas, and instead threw Egypt's weight into mediating a ceasefire. But that raises an even more intriguing question going forward — whether Morsi, having shown himself, for the moment, to prefer being more Deng Xiaoping than Ayatollah Khomeini, has any inclination to also be Anwar Sadat, that is, to use his clout to forge an Israeli-Palestinian breakthrough so that Egypt isn't caught in this vice again. It is impossible not to be tantalized by how much leverage Morsi could wield in the peace process, if he ever chose to engage Israel. Precisely because he represents the Muslim Brotherhood, the vanguard of Arab Islam, and precisely because he was democratically elected, if Morsi threw his weight behind an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal, it would be so much more valuable to Israel than the cold peace that Sadat delivered and Hosni Mubarak maintained. Sadat offered Israelis peace with the Egyptian state. Morsi could offer Israel peace with the Egyptian people and, through them, with the Muslim world beyond. Ironically, though, all of this would depend on Morsi not becoming a dictator like Mubarak, but on him remaining a legitimately elected president, truly representing the Egyptian people. That is now in doubt given Morsi's very troubling power grab last week and the violent response from the Egyptian street. President Barack Obama has to be careful not to sell out Egyptian democracy for quiet between Israel and Egypt and Hamas. We tried that under Mubarak. It didn't end well. No doubt Morsi's price for engaging with Israel would be the Arab Peace Initiative — full Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Arab East Jerusalem, save for mu-

tually agreed-upon land swaps, and some return of refugees, in return for full normalized relations. If Morsi advanced such a proposal in direct talks with Israelis, he could single-handedly revive the Israeli peace camp. Do I expect that? No more than I expect to win the lottery. The Muslim Brotherhood has long hated the Jewish state, as well as political and religious pluralism and feminism. Therefore, here's what I do expect: More trouble between Israel and Hamas that will constantly threaten to drag in Egypt. Hamas is a shameful organization. It subordinates the interests of the Palestinian people to Iran (and earlier to Syria), which wants Hamas to do everything it can to make a two-state solution impossible, because that will lock Israel into a permanent death grip on the West Bank, which will be the undoing of the Jewish democracy and will distract the world from Iran's and Syria's murderous behaviors.

Israel left all of Gaza in 2005, and Hamas had a choice: It could recognize Israel, have an open border and import computers, or it could continue to deny Israel's existence, keep the border sealed, and smuggle in rockets. It chose rockets over computers. With each rocket that lands near Tel Aviv or Jerusalem, another Israeli says, "How can we possibly let go of the West Bank and risk our airport being shut down?" That is just what Hamas and Iran want — a permanent, grinding, democracy-eroding, legitimacy-destroying, globally isolating Israeli occupation of the West Bank — and they are very happy to use the Palestinian people as a human sacrifice for that goal. The best way for Israel to undercut Hamas is by empowering the secular Palestinian Authority, led by Mahmoud Abbas, in the West Bank to gain greater independence and build a thriving economy, so every Palestinian can compare which strategy works best: working with Israel or against Israel. This Israeli government has failed to do that. It is so shortsighted. But Hamas makes it easy for Israel to get away with that by ignoring what we know from history: that whoever makes the Israeli silent majority feel morally insecure about occupation, but strategically secure in Israel, wins. After Sadat flew to Jerusalem, Israelis knew there was no way morally that they could hold onto the Sinai and strategically they no longer felt the need. When King Hussein of Jordan and Yasser Arafat did the same, they each got land back. Today, nothing makes Israelis feel more strategically insecure and morally secure with occupation than Hamas' stupid rocket attacks, even after Israel has withdrawn. So, as you can see, the unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the future of Egyptian democracy and the U.S.-Israel-Arab struggle with Iran and Syria are now all intertwined. Smart, courageous leadership today could defuse the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, advance Egyptian democracy and isolate the Iranian, Syrian and Hamas regimes. □



Lincoln, Liberty And Two Americas



CHARLES M. BLOW
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“Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation, so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure.”

@Those are the opening words of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, and they seem eerily prescient today because once again this country finds itself increasingly divided and pondering the future of this great union and the very ideas of liberty and equality for all.

The gap is growing between liberals and conservatives, the rich and the not rich, intergenerational privilege and new-immigrant power, patriarchy and gender equality, the expanders of liberty and the withdrawers of it. And that gap, which has geographic contours — the densely populated coastal states versus the less densely populated states of the Rocky Mountains, Mississippi Delta and Great Plains — threatens the very concept of a United States and pushing conservatives, left quaking after this month's election, to extremes.

Some have even moved to make our divisions absolute. The Daily Caller reported last week that “more than 675,000 digital signatures appeared on 69 sep-

arate secession petitions covering all 50 states, according to its analysis of requests lodged with the White House's “We the People” online petition system.

According to The Daily Caller, “Petitions from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, Tennessee and Texas residents have accrued at least 25,000 signatures, the number the Obama administration says it will reward with a staff review of online proposals.” President Barack Obama lost all those states, except Florida, in November. The former Republican presidential candidate Ron Paul took to his congressional website to laud the petitions of those bent on leaving the union, writing that “secession is a deeply American principle.” He continued: “If the possibility of secession is completely off the table there is nothing to stop the federal government from continuing to encroach on our liberties and no recourse for those who are sick and tired of it.”

The Internet has been lit up with the incongruity of the party of Lincoln's becoming the party of secessionists.

But even putting secession aside, it is ever more clear that red states are becoming more ideologically strident and creating a regional quasi country within the greater one.

They are rushing to enact restrictive laws on everything from voting to women's health issues.

As Monica Davey said in The New York Times on Friday, starting in January, “one party will hold the governor's office and majorities in both legislative chambers in at least 37 states, the largest number in 60 years and a significant jump from even two years ago.” As the National Conference of State Legislatures put it, “thanks to an apparent historic victory in Arkansas, Republicans gained control of the old South, turning the once solidly Democratic 11 states of the Confederacy upside down.” Arkansas will be the only one of these states with a Democratic governor.

As Davey pointed out, single-party control raises “the prospect that bold partisan agendas — on both ends of the political spectrum — will flourish over the next couple of years.” But it seems that “both ends of the political spectrum” should not be misconstrued as being equal. Democrats may want to expand personal liberties, but Republicans have spent the last few years working feverishly to restrict them. According to a January report from the Guttmacher Institute: “By almost any measure, issues related to reproductive health and rights at the state level received unprecedented attention in 2011. In the 50 states combined, legislators introduced more than 1,100 reproductive health and rights-related provisions, a sharp increase from the 950 introduced in 2010. By year's end, 135 of these provisions had been enacted in 36 states, an increase from the 89 enacted in 2010 and the 77 enacted in 2009.” Almost all the 2011 provisions were enacted in states with Republican-controlled legislatures. According to the Brennan Center for Justice at the New York University School of Law, at least 180 restrictive voting bills were introduced since the beginning of 2011 in 41 states.

Most of the states that passed restrictive voting laws have Republican-controlled legislatures. An NCSL report last year found “the 50 states and Puerto Rico have introduced a record 1,538 bills and resolutions relating to immigrants and refugees in the first quarter of 2011. This number surpasses the first quarter of 2010 by 358.” That trend slowed in 2012 in large part because of legal challenges. Many of the states that had enacted anti-immigrant laws or adopted similar resolutions by March of last year, again, had Republican-controlled legislatures.

We are moving towards two Americas with two contrasting — and increasingly codified — concepts of liberty. Can such a nation long endure? □

From home cooks, meals to share with strangers



ANN FARMER

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NEW YORK — On a recent evening, Carol Savvas made dinner in her TriBeCa home. She minced organic spinach, scallions and parsley. She cracked open “certified humane” eggs and mixed them with crumbled feta cheese from a farmers’ market. Spooning large dollops onto phyllo dough, she meticulously folded them into triangles.

Once her spinach pies came out of the oven, she put some aside for herself. The others she placed into two insulated bags with reheating instructions. Minutes later, her buzzer rang and a bike messenger took the pouches, setting off for another household in New York City. Savvas had no idea who would soon be noshing on her cooking.

Both households, though — the giver and the receiver — are members of Mealku, a new food-sharing cooperative. The co-op could be described as potluck meets carryout for people with high culinary standards and adventurous taste buds.

Started in July, Mealku has already attracted more than 700 members.

Carol Savvas, a member of a new food-sharing cooperative called Mealku, slips fresh spinach pies into insulated bags for a bike messenger to transport to another household, in New York, Oct. 10, 2012. Mealku, which started in July and has already attracted more than 700 members, allows people to post portions of food and sign up to receive them based on a point system. (Michelle V. Agins/The New York Times)

“What was appealing,” Savvas said, “was this community of like-minded people who care about food and sharing.” She was also eager to receive a piece of chocolate walnut rice cake that she had ordered for the second time through the co-op’s online reservations system. “I can’t wait,” she said. Getting people to eat better was just part of the motivation for creating Mealku, said its founder, Ted D’Cruz-Young, who is also the owner of Ideocracy, a marketing agency based in New York. “It grew out of frustration,” he said. “We waste too much.” He describes how Mealku acts as the middle man, facilitating the mechanics of food swapping and vetting potential members.



“No lazy, crazy or selfish people are allowed,” Mealku states on its website. Inspectors are sent to potential members’ homes to scrutinize kitchen hygiene and assess cooking standards. They look in refrigerators and check for expiration dates. They try to ensure that members are joining for the right reasons. “The young wonderful woman who came here,” Savvas said, “spent two hours with us.”

The online reservation system allows members to post portions of meals that they will be cooking within three days. Other members sign up to receive them no more than 40 minutes after the food is ready. After Hurricane Sandy, the co-op provided thousands of

homemade meals to people in need.

Mealku announced recently that it was partnering with Stonehenge, which leases luxury rentals in more than 20 apartment buildings in New York City. No money is exchanged. Mealku uses a point system, with members earning points when they post a food portion and when someone reserves it. Points are deducted when they order a portion.

Membership is free, but eventually Mealku plans to start charging a monthly fee plus a delivery charge to pay for bike messengers, recyclable food bags and other things. Mealku requires members to sign an agreement to ensure certain standards. But it

operates largely on trust. An official with the city’s Department of Health and Mental Hygiene said in an email that “clubs (including meal swaps or co-ops) where a group of people prepare meals for each other are not regulated by the health code.”

While that might worry some, “going to a restaurant is more of a roulette wheel,” said Sokie Lee, who joined in July after participating in a potluck picnic in Prospect Park sponsored by Mealku.

“I was instantly sold,” said Lee, who lives in Murray Hill. “The quality of the food was exactly what I wanted.” Besides, she added: “I love to cook. So it was no big deal for me to cook and share.”

A snafu did occur the first time she posted a portion from one of her home-cooked Asian-fusion meals. It was ordered by someone in Texas.

“A slight software glitch,” Lee said.

Since then, she has attracted at least a dozen takers in the city for culinary treats like her Tales From the Dark Side Chicken, which she described as a slow-cooked dark meat chicken dish “with truckloads of onions, garlic and ginger.”

More than 1,000 dishes have been posted since July, including slices of apple cake submitted by a woman who identified herself on the website as Rachael, the chef and owner behind a local sustainable food stock company.

She said she “had a bevy of Cameo apples and a hankering for this cake.” Participants include some sort of narrative of their dishes and descriptions of themselves.

D’Cruz-Young is seeing if schools might be interested in becoming part of Mealku. Leslie Li, the executive chef at the Rudolf Steiner School on the Upper East Side, which provides organic food for its students, said she might post surplus meals from school lunches. She said she would also consider joining herself. □